

THE
ODYSSEY

OF

HOMER,

TRANSLATED BY A. POPE.

A NEW EDITION.

ADORNED WITH PLATES.

VOLUME VI.

London:

PRINTED FOR F. J. DU ROVERAY,

By T. Bensley, Bolt Court;

AND SOLD BY J. AND A. ARCH, CORNHILL, AND

E. LLOYD, HARLEY-STREET.

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THE

TWENTY-FIRST BOOK

OF THE

ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE BENDING OF ULYSSES'S BOW.

PENELOPE, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who shall first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets. After their attempts have proved ineffectual, Ulysses taking Eumæus and Philæti^{us} apart, discovers himself to them; then, returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which, though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause to be delivered to his hands. He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings. Jupiter in the same instant thunders from heaven : Ulysses accepts the omen; and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready armed at his side.





Painted by H. Fuseli R.A.

Engraved by R.H. Cromek

BOOK XXI.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rivals' fires,
With her own art Penelope inspires.
Who now can bend Ulysses' bow, and wing
The well-aim'd arrow through the distant ring,
Shall end the strife, and win th' imperial dame; 5
But discord and black death await the game!

The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends;
At distance due a virgin-train attends:
A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd: 10
Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay;
There shone high-heap'd the labour'd brass and
ore,

And there the bow which great Ulysses bore,
And there the quiver, where now guiltless slept 15
Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since, when Sparta's shores he
trod,

• On young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd:

Beneath Orsilochus's roof they met;
 One loss was private, one a public debt: 20
 Messena's state from Ithaca detains
 Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd-swains;
 And to the youthful prince to urge the laws,
 The king and elders trust their common cause.
 But Iphitus employ'd on other cares, 25
 Search'd the wide country for his wand'ring mares,
 And mules, the strongest of the lab'ring kind;
 Hapless to search! more hapless still to find!
 For journeying on to Hercules, at length 29
 That lawless wretch, that man of brutal strength,
 Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress;
 And for the beauteous mares destroy'd his guest:
 He gave the bow; and on Ulysses' part
 Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart:
 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore 35
 Their first, last pledges! for they met no more.
 The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
 Ulysses bore not from his native land;
 Nor in the front of battle taught to bend;
 But kept, in dear memorial of his friend. 40
 Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 By many an easy step the matron went;

Then o'er the pavements glides with grace divine :
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine)
 The folding gates a dazzling light display'd, 45
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlaid.
 The bolt, obedient to the silken string,
 Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring;
 The wards respondent to the key turn round;
 The bars fall back; the flying valves resound: 50
 Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.
 She moves majestic through the wealthy room,
 Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume;
 There from the column where aloft it hung, 55
 Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung:
 Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
 And pensive sat, and tears began to flow.
 To full satiety of grief she mourns;
 Then silent, to the joyous hall returns, 60
 To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
 Th' unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.
 Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
 Which held th' alternate brass and silver rings.
 Full in the portal the chaste queen appears, 65
 And with her veil conceals the coming tears:

On either side awaits a virgin fair;

While thus the matron, with majestic air:

Say you, whom these forbidden walls inclose,
For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows; 70

If these neglected, faded charms can move?

Or is it but a vain pretence, you love?

If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,

Hear the conditions, and commence the strife:

Who first Ulysses' wond'rous bow shall bend, 75

And through twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,

Him will I follow, and forsake my home;—

For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,

Long, long the scene of all my past delight,

And still to last, the vision of my night! 80

Graceful she said; and bade Eumæus show
The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.

From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,

Touch'd at the dear memorials of his king.

Philætiús too relents; but secret shed 85

The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said:

Hence to your fields, ye rustics! hence, away;

Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day:

Nor to the royal heart recall in vain

The sad remembrance of a perish'd man. 90

Enough her precious tears already flow—
 Or share the feast with due respect, or go
 To weep abroad, and leave to us the bow:
 No vulgar task! Ill suits this courtly crew
 That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew. 95
 I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er
 While yet a child) what majesty he bore!
 And still (all infant as I was) retain
 The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man.

He said, but in his soul fond joys arise; 100
 And his proud hopes already win the prize.
 To speed the flying shaft through ev'ry ring,
 Wretch! is not thine!—the arrows of the king
 Shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing!

Then thus Telemachus: Some god I find 105
 With pleasing phrenzy has possess'd my mind;
 When a lov'd mother threatens to depart,
 Why with this ill-tim'd gladness leaps my heart?
 Come then, ye suitors! and dispute a prize
 Richer than all th' Achaian state supplies; 110
 Than all proud Argos, or Mycæna knows,
 Than all our isles or continents enclose:
 A woman matchless, and almost divine:
 Fit for the praise of ev'ry tongue but mine.

No more excuses then, no more delay; 115

Haste to the trial—Lo! I lead the way.

I too may try, and if this arm can wing

The feather'd arrow through the destin'd ring,

Then if no happier knight the conquest boast,

I shall not sorrow for a mother lost; 120

But blest in her, possess these arms alone,

Heir of my father's strength, as well as throne.

He spoke; then rising, his broad sword unbound,

And cast his purple garment on the ground.

A trench he open'd; in a line he plac'd 125

The level axes, and the points made fast.

(His perfect skill the wond'ring gazers ey'd,

The game as yet unseen, as yet untry'd.)

Then, with a manly pace, he took his stand; 129

And grasp'd the bow, and twang'd it in his hand.

Three times, with beating heart, he made essay;

Three times, unequal to the task gave way:

A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd:

And thrice he hop'd, and thrice again he fear'd:

The fourth had drawn it.—The great sire with joy

Beheld; but with a sign forbade the boy. 136

His ardour straight th' obedient prince supprest,

And arful, thus the suitor-train address:

Oh lay the cause on youth yet immature!
 (For heav'n forbid, such weakness should endure)
 How shall this arm, unequal to the bow, 141
 Retort an insult, or repel a foe?
 But you! whom heav'n with better nerves has blest,
 Accept the trial, and the prize contest.

He cast the bow before him; and apart 145
 Against the polish'd quiver propt the dart.
 Resuming then his seat, Eupithes' son,
 The bold Antinous, to the rest begun:
 'From where the goblet first begins to flow,
 From right to left, in order take the bow; 150
 And prove your sev'ral strengths.'—The princes
 heard,

And first Leiodes, blameless priest, appear'd:
 The eldest born of Oenops' noble race,
 Who next the goblet held his holy place.
 He, only he, of all the suitor-throng, 155
 Their deeds detested, and abjur'd the wrong.
 With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains;
 The stubborn horn resisted all his pains!
 Already in despair he gives it o'er:—
 Take it who will, he cries; I strive no more 160
 What num'rous deaths attend this fatal boy?
 What souls and spirits shall it send below?

Better indeed to die, and fairly give
 Nature her debt, than disappointed live ;
 With each new sun to some new hope a prey, 165
 Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.

How long in vain Penelope we sought?
 This bow shall ease us of that idle thought ;
 And send us with some humbler wife to live,
 Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give. 170

Thus speaking, on the floor the bow he plac'd
 (With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd):
 At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws ;
 And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said: 175
 What words ill-omen'd from thy lips have fled?
 Thy coward-function ever is in fear;
 Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.

Why should this bow be fatal to the brave?
 Because the priest is born a peaceful slave. 180
 Mark then what others can—He ended there;

And bade Melanthius a vast pile prepare.
 He gives it instant flame: then fast beside
 Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.
 With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er, 185
 Chafe ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.

Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain:
 The bow inflexible resists their pain.
 The force of great Eurymachus alone
 And bold Antinous, yet untried, unknown: 190
 Those only now remain'd;—but those confest
 Of all the train the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
 The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.
 The king observes them: he the hall forsakes, 195
 And, past the limits of the court, o'ertakes.
 Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke:
 Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock!
 Shall I the secret of my breast conceal;
 Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell? 200
 Say, should some fav'ring god restore again
 The lost Ulysses to his native reign?
 How beat your hearts?—what aid would you afford?
 To the proud suitors; or your ancient lord?

Philætiüs thus:—Oh were thy word not vain!
 Would mighty Jove restore that man again! 206
 These aged sinews with new vigour strung
 In his blest cause should emulate the young,
 With equal vows Eumæus too implor'd
 Each pow'r above, with wishes for his lord. 210

He saw their secret souls, and thus began :
 Those vows the gods accord—behold the man !
 Your own Ulysses ! twice ten years detain'd
 By woes and wand'rings from his hapless land :
 At length he comes ; but comes despis'd, unknown ;
 And finding faithful you, and you alone. 216
 All else have cast him from their very thought ;
 E'en in their wishes and their pray'rs forgot !
 Hear then, my friends ! If Jove this arm succeed,
 And give you impious revellers to bleed, 220
 My care shall be, to bless your future lives
 With large possessions, and with faithful wife :
 Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend ;
 And each on young Telemachus attend,
 And each be call'd his brother, and my friend.
 To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye ; 226
 Lo ! the broad scar indented on my thigh,
 When with Autolycus's sons, of yore,
 On Parnass' top I chas'd the tusky boar.
 His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd 230
 The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd :
 Eager they view'd ; with joy they stood amaz'd ;
 With tearful eyes o'er all their master gaz'd :
 Around his neck their longing arms they cast ; 234
 His head, his shoulders, and his knees embrac'd :

Tears follow'd tears :—no word was in their pow'r;
In solemn silence fell the kindly show'r.

The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands. 239

Thus had their joy wopt down the setting sun,
But first the wise man ceas'd, and thus begun:
Enough—on other cares your thought employ;
For danger waits on all untimely joy.

Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near:
Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear. 245

Re-enter then: not all at once; but stay

Some moments you, and let me lead the way.

To me, neglected as I am, I know

The haughty suitors will deny the bow;

But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis borne away, 250

Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.

At ev'ry portal let some matron wait;

And each lock fast the well-compacted gate:

Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear;

Tho' arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear.

To thy strict charge, Philætius! we consign 256

The court's main gate: to guard that pass be thine.

This said, he first return'd: the faithful swains
At distance follow, as their king ordains.

Before the flame Eurymachus now stands, 260
 And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands:
 Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man
 Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began:

I mourn the common cause: for, oh my friends!
 On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends?
 Not the lost nuptials can affect me more 266
 (For Greece has beauteous dames on ev'ry shore),
 But baffled thus! confess'd so far below
 Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow!
 How shall all ages our attempt deride? 270
 Our weakness scorn?—Antinous thus replied:

Not so, Eurymachus: that no man draws
 The wond'rous bow, attend another cause.
 Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day, 274
 Which thoughtless we in games would waste away:
 Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forego,
 And here leave fixt the ringlets in a row.
 Now bid the sew'r approach; and let us join
 In due libations, and in rites divine:
 So end our night: before the day shall spring, 280
 The choicest off'rings let Melanthius bring:
 Let then to Phœbus' name the fatted thighs
 Feed the rich smokes, high-curling to the skies;

So shall the patron of these arts bestow
(For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow. 285

They heard well-pleas'd : the ready heralds bring
The cleansing waters from the limpid spring :
The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
In order circling to the peers around.
That rite complete, up-rôse the thoughtful man ;
And thus his meditated scheme began :

If what I ask your noble minds approve,
Ye peers and rivals in the royal love !
Chief, if it hurt not great Antinous' ear
(Whose sage decision I with wonder hear) 295
And if Eurymachus the motion please ;
Give heav'n this day, and rest the bow in peace.
To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
And take it he, the favour'd of the skies !
But since till then this trial you delay, 300
Trust it one moment to my hands to-day :
Fain would I prove, before your judging eyes,
What once I was, whom wretched you despise ;
If yet this arm its ancient force retain ;
Or if my woes (a long-continu'd train) 305
And wants and insults, make me less than man.

Rage flash'd in lightning from the suitors' eyes,
Yet mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.

Antinous then:—O miserable guest!
 Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast?
 Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd 311
 To sit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd,
 Admitted here with princes to confer;
 A man unknown, a needy wanderer?
 To copious wine this insolence we owe: 315
 And much thy betters wine can overthrow.
 The great Eurytion when this frenzy stung,
 Pirithous' roofs with frantic riot rung;
 Boundless the Centaur rag'd: till one and all 319
 The heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall;
 His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,
 And sent him sober'd home, with better wit.
 Hence with long war the double race was curst:
 Fatal to all; but to th' aggressor first.
 Such fate I prophesy our guest attends, 325
 If here this interdicted bow he bends.
 Nor shall these walls such insolence contain:
 The first fair wind transports him o'er the main;
 Where Echetus to death the guilty brings
 (The worst of mortals, e'en the worst of kings).
 Better than that, if thou approve our cheer; 331
 Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.

To this the queen her just dislike exprest:—
 'Tis impious, prince! to harm the stranger-guest;
 Base to insult who bears a suppliant's name: 335
 And some respect Telemachus may claim.

What if th' immortals on the man bestow
 Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow?
 Shall I, a queen, by ~~rich~~ chiefs ador'd,
 Accept a wand'ring stranger for my lord? 340
 A hope so idle never touch'd his brain:
 Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
 Far be he banish'd from this stately scene
 Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean!

O fair! and wisest of so fair a kind! 345

(Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd)

Mov'd by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,
 We dread the all-arraigning voice of fame;
 We dread the censure of the meanest slave,
 The weakest woman:—all can wrong the brave.
 ' Behold what wretches to the bed pretend 351
 Of that brave chief whose bow they could not bend!
 In came a beggar of the strolling crew,
 And did what all those princes could not do,
 Thus will the common voice our deed defame,
 And thus posterity upbraid our name. 356

To whom the queen:—If fame engage your
views,

Forbear those acts which infamy pursues:

Wrong and oppression no renown can raise;

Know, friend! that virtue is the path to praise.

The stature of our guest, his port, his face, 361

Speak him descended from no vulgar race.

To him the bow, as he desires, convey;

And to his hand if Phœbus give the day,

Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear 365

A two-edg'd falchion, and a shining spear,

Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,

And safe conveyance to his port of rest.

O royal mother! ever-honour'd name!

Permit me (cries Telemachus) to claim 370

A son's just right.—No Grecian prince but I

Has pow'r this bow to grant, or to deny.

Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,

And all wide Elis' courser-breeding plain,

To me alone my father's arms descend; 375

And mine alone they are, to give or lend.

Retire, O queen! thy household task resume,

Tend, with thy maids, the labours of the loom;

The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd
 His sage reply, and with her train retir'd:
 There in her chamber as she sat apart,
 Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
 On her Ulysses then she fix'd her soul: 385
 Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,
 Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
 In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Now through the press the bow Eumæus bore,
 And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar. 390
 Hold, lawless rustic! whither wilt thou go?
 To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow?
 Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,
 Far from the sweet society of men,
 To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made; 395
 If heav'n and Phœbus lend the suitors aid.

Thus they.—Aghast he laid the weapon down,
 But bold Telemachus thus urg'd him on:
 Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words;
 What? hopes the fool to please so many lords?
 Young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand, 401
 Stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the
 land.

Oh! could the vigour of this arm as well
 Th' oppressive suitors from my walls expel!

Then what a shoal of lawless men should go 405
To fill with tumult the dark courts below?

The suitors with a scornful smile survey
The youth, indulging in the genial day.
Eumæus, thus encourag'd, hastes to bring
The strife-full bow, and give it to the king. 410
Old Euryclea, calling then aside,
Hear what Telemachus enjoins (he cried):
At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
And each lock fast the well-compacted gate;
And if unusual sounds invade their ear, 415
If arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear,
Let none to call or issue forth presume,
But close attend the labours of the loom.

Her prompt obedience on his order waits;
Clos'd in an instant were the palace-gates. 420
In the same moment forth Philætius flies,
Secures the court, and with a cable ties
The utmost gate (the cable strongly wrought
Of Byblos' reed, a ship from Egypt brought);
Then unperceiv'd and silent at the board 425
His seat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.

And now his well-known bow the master bore,
Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er;

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd
 His sage reply, and with her train retir'd:
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And now his well-known bow the master bore,
Turn'd on all sides and view'd it o'er and o'er:

Lest time or worms had done the weapon wrong,
Its owner absent, and untried so long. 430

While some deriding—How he turns the bow!
Some other like it sure the man must know,
Or else would copy; or in bows he deals:
Perhaps he makes them; or perhaps he steals.—
Heav'n to this wretch (another cried) be kind!
And bless, in all to which he stands inclin'd, 436
With such good fortune as he now shall find.

Heedless he heard them:—but disdain'd reply;
The bow perusing with exactest eye. 439
Then, as some heav'nly minstrel, taught to sing
High notes, responsive to the trembling string,
To some new strain when he adapts the lyre,
Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,
Relaxes, strains, and draws them to and fro:
So the great master drew the mighty bow; 445
And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.
From his essaying hand the string let fly
Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's
cry.

A gen'ral horror ran through all the race; 450
Sunk was each heart, and pale was ev'ry face.

Signs from above ensu'd:—th' unfolding sky
 In lightning burst; Jove thunder'd from on high.
 Fir'd at the call of heav'n's almighty lord,
 He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board
 (Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath, 456
 But soon to fly, the messengers of death).

Now sitting as he was, the cord he drew,
 Through ev'ry ringlet levelling his view;
 Then notch'd the shaft, releas'd, and gave it wing;
 The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string, 461
 Sung on direct, and threaded ev'ry ring.
 The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds;
 Pierc'd thro' and thro', the solid gate resounds.

Then to the prince:—Nor have I wrought thee
 shame; 465

Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim;
 Nor prov'd the toil too hard; nor have I lost
 That ancient vigour, once my pride and boast.
 Ill I deserve these haughty peers' disdain:—
 Now let them comfort their dejected train: 470
 In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait till ev'ning for the genial joy:
 Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night;—

He said, then gave a nod;—and at the word
Telemachus girds on his shining sword. 476
Fast by his father's side he takes his stand;
The beamy jav'lin lightens in his hand.

SELECT NOTES

TO

BOOK XXI.

THIS book is entitled Τὸξὺ Σεισις, or 'the proposition of the bow.'

We are to remember that this day was sacred to Apollo. This is evident from the preceding book, where the Ithacesians offer an hecatomb in a grove consecrated to that deity: the diversion suits the day, the exercise of the bow being proper to be practised on the festival of that deity, who is the patron of it. Several of the titles of Apollo are derived from it; Ἑκατόξος, Ἑκατόσταλος, Ἀργυροτόξος. It is strange that this necessary observation should escape the notice of all commentators.

If any thing further were wanting to reconcile us to the conduct of Penelope in proposing the bow, an instance almost parallel to it might be produced from history. When Cambyses was preparing to make war against Ethiopia, the king of that country bent his great bow with two fingers in the presence of the Persian ambassadors, and unbending it again, delivered it to them with these words: That when the Persians could do the like, they might hope to conquer the Ethiopians. There is nothing more absurd in the delivery of the bow to the suitors by Penelope, than in the same act of the Ethiopian king to the Persian ambassadors.

V. 9. *A brazen key she held, &c.*] The numerous particularities and digressive histories crowded together in the beginning of this book have not escaped censure. The poet very circumstantially describes the key, and the make of it, as likewise the bow and quiver, then tells us who gave it to Ulysses. At the mention of the donor's name he starts into a little history of him, and returns not in many lines to his subject; he then no less circumstantially describes the chamber, and the frame of the door, he

step and motion she takes, till she produces the bow before the suitors. This conduct has been liable to objection, as made up of particulars of small importance, to no proposed end. But notwithstanding, every circumstance is not without its effect and beauty; and nothing better shews the power of the poet's diction. So great a critic as Vida admired this very passage. *Poetic. lib. ii.*

‘ Ipsa procos etiam ut jussit certare sagittis
 Penelope, optatas promittens callida tædas
 Victori, per quanta moræ dispendia mentes
 Suspensas trahet ante, viri quam proferet arcum,
 Thesauris clausum antiquis penitusque repostum.’

The poet adapts his verse to the nature of his subject; the description loiters, to express the studied delay of Penelope, and her unwillingness to bring affairs to a decision. . However, I will not promise that these digressions and ancient histories will please every reader; the passage is so far from being faulty, that it is really an instance of Homer's judgment; yet every thing that is not a fault, is not a beauty. The case is, Penelope proposes the trial of the bow, merely to protract time from the nuptials; she is slow in producing it for the same reason: and Homer, to paint this slowness in a lively manner, lets the subject of the poem stand still, and wanders out of the way, that he may not come too soon to the end of his journey.

V. 21. *Messena's state, &c.*] It has been disputed whether Messena here was a city or a country; Strabo affirms it to be a country, lib. viii. It was a port of Laconia, under the dominion of Menelaus in the time of the war with Troy; and then (continues that author) the city named Messene was not built. Pausanias is of the same opinion, lib. iv. c. 1. ‘ Before the battle of Leuctra between the Thebans and Lacedæmonians, it is my judgment that there was no city called Messene;’ this is evident from the words of Homer,

Τῶ δ' ἐν Μессσηνῇ ξυμβλητὴν ἀλληλοῖν
 Οἶκῳ ἐν Ορσιλοχοῖο.

Now Orsilochous lived in Pheræ, a city of Messenia, and consequently Ulysses and Iphitus meeting at his palace in Messenia,

Homer must mean the country, not the city. That Orsilochus lived in Pheræ, appears from the third Odyssey :

Ες Φηρας δ' ἰκοντο Διοκλῆς ποτι δαμα,
'Υιὸς Ὀρσιλοχαιο. Γ. 38, 9.

This Iphitus was the son of Eurytus mentioned in the eighth book, famous for his skill in archery :

' Vain Eurytus ! whose art became his crime ;
Swept from the earth, he perish'd in his prime ;
Sudden th' irremeable way he trod,
Who boldly durst defy the bowyer-god.'

So that even this digression is not foreign to the purpose. The poet largely describes the bow, being to make great use of it in the sequel of the Odyssey. He shews it was originally in the possession of Eurytus, the most famous archer in the world : nay, this very digression may appear to be absolutely necessary ; it being requisite to describe that bow, as of no common excellence and strength, which was not to be drawn by any of the suitors ; and at the same time it sets off the strength of the hero of the poem, who alone is able to bend it.

V. 22. *Three hundred sheep, &c.*] It has been observed in a former annotation, that such ravages or piracies were not only lawful, but honourable amongst the ancients ; why then is Ulysses here sent to redemand the spoils made by the Messenians ? Dacier answers, that such inroads were not allowable except in open war ; she means between Greeks and Greeks ; for they themselves exercised such piracies with impunity against other nations.

V. 31. *Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgrest.*] Homer very solemnly condemns this action of Hercules in slaying Iphitus : and some authors (remarks Eustathius) defend him by saying, he was seized with madness, and threw Iphitus down from the top of his palace ; but this is contrary to Homer, and to the sentiment of those who write that Hercules was delivered as a slave to Omphale, for the expiation of the murder of Iphitus.

But what chiefly wants explication is the expression,

..... ὅδε τραπίζαν

That is, 'he paid no reverence to his table.' The table was held sacred by the ancients; by means of which, honour was paid to the god of friendship and hospitality. It was therefore a crime to dishonour it by any indecent behaviour. To this purpose Juvenal:

'Hic verbis nullus pudor, aut reverentia mensæ.'

The statues of the gods were raised upon the tables. They were consecrated by placing on them salt, which was always esteemed holy; and by offering libations to the gods from them: the table therefore is called in Plutarch φίλων θεῶν βωμὸν, καὶ ξενίων, 'the altar of the gods of friendship and hospitality; and therefore to have eaten at the same table was esteemed an inviolable obligation of friendship; and τραπέζαν παραβαίνειν, to transgress against the table, a breach of the laws of hospitality, and the blackest of crimes. I will only add, that it was customary upon making an alliance of hospitality to give mutual tokens: thus Ulysses here presents Iphitus with a sword and spear; Iphitus, Ulysses with a bow. And the producing these tokens was a recognition of the covenant of hospitality between the persons themselves, and their descendants in following generations.

V. 51. *Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring.*] This description presents us with a noble image: Homer introduces it to shew the largeness and strength of the door, which resounds as it opens. This exalts a trifling circumstance into sublimity and dignity, and renders a common action poetical; not unlike that in the xxivth of the Iliad:

'Wide as appears some palace-gate display'd,
So broad his pinions stretch'd their ample shade.'

V. 57. *Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
And pensive sat, and tears began to flow.*]

The bow recalls to her mind the thought of her husband, and this raises her sorrows. The least trifle that once belonged to a beloved person, is sufficient to cast a cloud over the soul, which naturally falls in a shower of tears: and no doubt the exercise which the suitors are to practise with the bow, upon which her

future fate depends, aggravates her sorrows ; she weeps not only for the loss of Ulysses, but at the thought that she is ready to enter upon second nuptials, contrary to her inclinations.

V. 105. *Then thus Telemachus : Some god I find, &c.]* This speech is not without greater obscurity than is usual in so clear a writer as Homer. M. Dacier has done it justice, and clearly opened the sense of it in her paraphrase. ‘ Surely, says Telemachus, Jupiter has disordered my understanding. I see my mother, wise as she is, preparing to leave the palace, and enter upon a second marriage ; and yet in these melancholy circumstances, I think of nothing but diverting myself, and being an idle spectator of this exercise of the bow. No, no ; this is not to be suffered : you (the suitors) use your utmost efforts to rob me of Penelope ; I will therefore use mine to retain her : a woman the most excellent in any nation. But why do I praise her ? you know her worth. Use therefore no pretext to defer the trial of the bow, that we may come to an issue. I will try the bow with you ; and if I succeed, then I will retain her as the prize of the conquest ; then she shall not be obliged to second nuptials : nor will Penelope abandon a son, who emulating his father, is (like him) able to bear the prize from so many antagonists.’

This is the true meaning of the words of Telemachus. The diction indeed is somewhat embarrassed, and the connexion a little obscure : but this is done by the poet to express the disorder and hurry of mind in Telemachus, who fears for the fate of Penelope : therefore the connexion of the periods is interrupted, to represent Telemachus starting through eagerness of spirit from thought to thought, without order or regularity.

V. 135. *The fourth had drawn it. The great sire with joy
Beheld, but with a sign forbade. . . .]*

It is not apparent at the first view why Ulysses prohibits Telemachus from drawing the bow ; but Eustathius gives sufficient reason for this conduct : it would have defeated his whole design, and rendered the death of the suitors impracticable ; for Telemachus has declared that he would retain Penelope, if he succeeded in the exercise of the bow ; and this of necessity would create an

immediate contest between that hero and the suitors, and bring matters unseasonably to extremity. The same author assigns a second reason: Ulysses fears lest Telemachus, by bending the bow, should make it more supple and flexible; and therefore commands him to desist, lest it should be drawn by the suitors; besides, if he had drawn it, it would have raised an emulation amongst them, and they would have applied the utmost of their abilities not to be outdone by so young a person as Telemachus; but his despair to effect it, makes them less solicitous, the trial being equally unsuccessful to them all.

It may also be observed, that there is a very happy address made to Telemachus by Homer; he shews us that he could have drawn it, but desists in obedience to Ulysses. Thus the poet has found out a way to give Telemachus the honour of the victory without obtaining it: and at the same time shews the superior wisdom of Ulysses, who restrains his son in the heat of his attempt; and makes him, by a happy presence of mind, at once foresee the danger, and prevent it.

V. 149. *From where the goblet first begins to flow,
From right to left, &c.]*

Antinous makes this proposition, that every person may try his skill without confusion. Perhaps it is proposed by Antinous by way of omen; the right hand being reckoned fortunate: but however that be, it is very evident that in the entertainments of the ancients the cup was delivered towards the right hand: hence δεξιῶσις came to signify to drink towards the right hand; and Athenæus thus interprets this passage in the first of the Iliad:

..... χρυσεῖοις δεπασσι

Δειδεχατ' ἀλλήλους.

Which, remarks that author, signifies εδεξιῶτο προπινόντες ἑαυτοῖς τὰς δεξιάς. And there is express mention made of this practice, lib. i. ver. 597, of the Iliad:

..... θεοῖς ἐνδεξία πᾶσιν

Ωινοχοεῖ.

That is, 'beginning from the right hand,' as the scholiast rightly interprets it, 'Vulcan delivered the bowl to all the gods.'

This observation explains various passages in many ancient authors, as well as in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: the custom indeed is not of any great importance; but is at least a curiosity, and valuable because ancient. I doubt not but the bowl out of which these persons drank, would by antiquaries be thought inestimable; and the possession of an ancient bowl is not quite so valuable as the knowledge of an ancient custom.

V. 152. *Leiodes, blameless priest.*] The word in the original is *Διοσκον*, a person who makes predictions from victims, or from the smoke of the sacrifice. This Leiodes, the poet tells us, sat next to the bowl. The reason of it, saith Eustathius, was because the suitors feared lest poison should be mixed in it; and they thought themselves safe through his care and inspection: but it may perhaps be a better reason to say, that he sat there in discharge of his office as a prophet, to make libations to the gods; as was customary at the beginning and end of all entertainments.

The poet adds, that this prophet was placed at the extremity of the apartment. The reason may be because he was an enemy to the insolence of the suitors, and therefore withdrew from their conversation. Or perhaps the word is inserted only to shew that his place was the first (for Eustathius explains *μυχιστα* by *πρωτ* and *εὐδιστα*), and therefore he was the most proper person to begin the experiment, that the rest might make trial according as they were seated, successively; and what makes this the more probable is, that the propination always began from the most honourable person.

V. 161. *What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow?*

What souls and spirits, &c.]

There is in these words a full and clear prediction of the destruction of the suitors by the bow of Ulysses. But what follows, when the prophet comes to explain himself, renders it ambiguous. 'Better indeed to die,' &c. The next line is very remarkable for the distinction it makes between *δυμο*; and *ψυχη*, 'soul' and

‘spirit:’ the reader may turn to the note on lib. xxiii. ver. 92, 124, of the Iliad; and that on lib. xi. ver. 743 of the Odyssey, where an account is given of the notion of the ancients concerning this division. I shall only here add a passage in St. Paul to the Hebrews, which did not then occur to me, that remarkably falls in with it. ‘The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword; piercing even to the dividing asunder of ‘soul’ and ‘spirit.’ Heb. iv. 12.

This Leiodes falls by the sword of Ulysses in the next book. Is it not injustice to take away the life of a person who is here described as a man of virtue; detesting the actions of the suitors, and dignified with prophecy? It is easy to answer this objection. He is one of the suitors to Penelope; as appears from his trying the bow among the rest of them, in order to obtain her in marriage: and consequently he is involved in the general crime. This distinguishes his case from that of Medon and Phemius, whom Ulysses spares; it appearing that they made no pretensions to the bed of Penelope; whereas Leiodes endeavours to marry the queen, which single act would exclude Ulysses from his own bed and dominions.—Besides, if we would escape the punishment of wicked men, we must not only detest their crimes, but conversation.

V. 186. *Chafe ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.*] This passage has been egregiously misunderstood: and it has been imagined that this unguent is to anoint the limbs of the suitors to make them more supple; after the manner of the wrestlers who observed that custom. But it is very evident that *τοξον* is to be understood in the Greek; and that it is the bow, not the limbs of the suitors, that is to be anointed. Eustathius thus fully explains it: the lard is brought to make the bow pliant; they chafe it before the fire that the particles of it may enter the pores of the bow, and render it flexible. But Eustathius falls into an error about the seat that is brought by Melanthius: he imagines the suitors sat while they drew the bow, that they might be upon a level with the ringlets which were fixed upon the ground: whereas, in reality, the seat is brought, that they may sit while

they chafe the bow. Homer himself says, when Leiodes endeavours to draw it, that he stood up, *ανιστατο*, and again,

‘He stood, and stepping forward tried the bow.’

Στη δ' αὖ ἐπ' ἕδον ἰων, καὶ τοξὸν πειρητιζεν. (v. 140.)

But how is this to be reconciled with the conduct of Ulysses, who is directly affirmed to sit while he draws it?

..... ἔλακεν νευρὴν γλυφιδασίῃ

Αὐτοθεν, ἐκ διφροῖο, καθήμενος (v. 419, 20.)

That circumstance is inserted to shew the great strength and dexterity of Ulysses, who is able to draw it in that disadvantageous posture: the poet in every incident maintains his superiority.

V. 193. *Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.]*

It is wonderful how exactly the poet observes the distribution of time: he distinctly marks the action of every day; and allots a proper space to every action. In this place the poem goes forward while Ulysses withdraws to engage the assistance of Philætiſ and Eumæus. The ſuitors are amused and employed about the bow, while Ulysses steals away from their observation, and returns without raising their jealousy. The poet likewise manages the time of the discovery of Ulysses very judiciously. Though he knew the fidelity of Eumæus and Philætiſ, yet he trusts them not with the knowledge of his person till the very hour of execution; agreeable to the general character of his cautious nature and profound secrecy. But then is not this an imputation to Penelope, that he should choose to discover himself to these two persons, rather than to his queen? The answer is, There was a necessity for his discovery to the former, but none to the latter: he wants their assistance in the future engagement, and makes good use of it; whereas a discovery made to the queen could have been of no advantage, and might possibly have proved de-

covery and interview with Philæti^{us} and Eumæus. The poet therefore reserves the discovery of Ulysses to Penelope to a time of more leisure; that he may dwell upon it more largely, and beautify his poem with so essential an ornament with greater solemnity.

V. 252. *At ev'ry portal, &c.*] This is a very necessary injunction. Ulysses fears not only lest any of the suitors should make his escape, but also lest any of the women who were friends to the suitors should give information to their partisans abroad, and introduce them to their assistance. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 274. *Sacred to Phæbus is the solemn day.*] Antinous, in this reply, speaks, as well as Eurymachus, with dissimulation; he is unwilling to give a true reason, and therefore invents a false one. The true reason why he defers the trial of the bow is, because he fears his inability to draw it; the feigned reason is a pretended piety paid to the day: it was a day to be observed religiously; and he insinuates that all sports upon it are a profanation of it, and consequently, Apollo being provoked, disables them from drawing the bow, of which he is the patron. This is the reason why he proposes to offer a libation, to atone for the abuse of the day by their diversions. But perhaps the reason why Antinous defers the exercise of the bow to the following day, is not because he thought it unlawful to proceed in it on the festival of Apollo; for why should an exercise which was instituted in honour of that deity, be thought a profanation of the day? I should therefore rather conclude, that the impiety intended by Antinous, was their omission in not offering a sacrifice to that god before they begun the trial, that he might prosper their endeavours: the conclusion of his speech makes this opinion probable: 'Let us now defer the experiment; and offer sacrifice in the morning to Apollo, that he may give us success in drawing the bow:' which implies that they were unsuccessful because they had forgot to sacrifice. I will only add, that Antinous mentions a goat as an offering to Apollo. We have before seen bulls, sheep, and bullocks offered to that deity: the reason why a goat is a proper victim, I suppose, is because he is a rural god,

and patron of shepherds, and therefore all kinds of beasts were offered to him promiscuously.

V. 318. *Pirithous' roofs, &c.*] The story of the Centaur is this: Pirithous, a Lapithite, marrying Hippodamia the daughter of Adrastus, invited the Centaurs and Lapithæ to his nuptials: the Centaurs drinking to great excess, and offering violence to the bride, engaged them in a quarrel. Eurytion was the person who began the disorder, and the war that ensued became fatal to the whole nation of the Centaurs. Horace alludes to this history:

‘ At nequis modici transiliat munera liberi,
Centaurea monet cum Lapithis rixa super mero.
Debellata.’ Carm. l. 18.

The Lapithites were a people of Thessaly, inhabiting the mountains Pindus and Othrys; the Centaurs were their neighbours, and dwelt in mount Pelion. This war between the Lapithites and the Centaurs probably lasted about a year: for it began on the day of the nuptials of Pirithous; and on the day that his son Polypætes was born he obtained a decisive victory over the Centaurs, and drove them from mount Pelion. Thus lib. ii. v. 896 of the Iliad:

‘ Thy troops, Argissa, Polypætes leads
And Eleon, shelter'd by Olympus' shades;
Sprung from Pirithous of immortal race,
The fruit of fair Hippodamé's embrace,
That day when hurl'd from Pelion's cloudy head
To distant dens the shaggy Centaurs fled.’

This history is at large related by Ovid, Metam. xii. He calls Eurytion by the name of Eurytus, and describes the nuptial feast in a cave, and not in the palace of Pirithous. Thus Mr. Dryden:

‘ In a cool cave's recess the treat was made,
Whose entrance trees with spreading boughs o'ershade.
There one more brutal of the brutal brood,—
Or whether wine or beauty fir'd his blood,
Or both, at once,—beheld with lustful eyes
The bride, at once resolv'd to make his prize;

Down went the board; and fast'ning on her hair
 He seiz'd with sudden force the frightened fair:
 'Twas Eurytus began.....

V. 357. *If fame engage your views,
 Forbear those acts which infamy pursues.*]

This answer of Penelope is very severe and very just. Eurymachus (observes Dacier) had said, If this beggar draws the bow, we shall lose our reputation: Penelope answers, It is in vain to be solicitous about your reputation, when your lives are a series of infamous actions. Fame is the reward of good, and shame the portion of base and unworthy deeds: it is no dishonour to a prince to be surpassed by a beggar in strength; but a prince is more infamous than a beggar, if his actions betray him to be a worse man; a base action sinks him into contempt, and taints his nobility.

V. 377. *Retire, O queen! &c.*] This speech has been accused of too great a liberty, and as wanting in respect from a son to a mother. Telemachus speaks with authority, when he ought to have shewed obedience and filial duty. But these critics mistake the design and intention of Telemachus: he speaks directly to Penelope; but obliquely and intentionally to the suitors: it is for this reason that he says he is supreme in the palace; viz. to let them know that he will not give up the sway into their power. He tells Penelope that the bow shall be used as he directs: this is done to intimidate the suitors, and prepare the way for the delivery of it to Ulysses, contrary to their injunctions to Eumæus.

The verses are the same with those in the sixth of the Iliad. There Hector speaks to Andromache; a tender husband to a fond wife; and the speech was never taxed with any want of love and kindness. In that place, Hector remembers that he is an husband; yet forgets not that he is an hero. In this, Telemachus deviates not from the duty of a son; yet speaks in the character and style of a prince.

Eustathius excellently enlarges upon the words of Telemachus. There is an absolute necessity that Penelope should withdraw, that she might not be present at the scene of blood and

slaughter. It is for the same reason that the poet introduces Minerva casting her into a profound sleep; that she might be entirely ignorant of the death of the suitors. This is absolutely necessary: for if she had been acquainted that Ulysses was returned, and the suitors slain by his hand, there could have been no room for the interview between Ulysses and Penelope in the succeeding parts of the *Odyssey*.

But is not Minerva introduced upon too small an occasion, only to cast Penelope into a slumber? would not nature have worked the same effect without the assistance of the goddess? I have already remarked, that machines are not always used out of necessity; but frequently for ornament, to dignify the poetry, and create surprise by the appearance of a deity. But here the poet brings down Minerva, to give credibility to the story: for though it be true that nature is sufficient to produce this effect, yet that it should operate in the critical and exact moment, when the poet has occasion for it, is in some degree incredible: the poet therefore, to reconcile the relation to probability, introduces a preternatural sleep, occasioned by the immediate operation of a goddess.

V. 407. *The suitors with a scornful smile, &c.*] Spondanus believes they laugh out of contempt of Telemachus. Dacier, because they believe the time come which is to end all their doubts by the marriage of Penelope: they hope to draw the bow; and this hope mollifies their anger. But all these reasons (as well as those of Eustathius) seem to be rather invented than natural. We may find a sufficient reason of their laughter, from the sharpness of Telemachus towards Eumæus: they rejoice to see an enemy (for such they esteem Eumæus) mis-used. And this will likewise give a reason why the poet adds, that they ceased their anger against Telemachus; namely, because he gratifies their ill-will by threatening Eumæus.

V. 412. *Hear what Telemachus enjoins, &c.*] It is very evident that this command proceeds not from Telemachus but Ulysses. It was Ulysses who gave directions to shut the door of the women's apartments: but Eumæus is ignorant that Euryclea was acquainted with the return of Ulysses; and therefore speaks

as from Telemachus. He knew very well that she would obey the orders of Telemachus: but if she had not been acquainted with the return of Ulysses, she would have made some hesitation; believing the beggar to be really a stranger, and not Ulysses. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 423. (*the cable strongly wrought
Of Byblos' reed*]

The word in the Greek is βυβλινον: which we are not to understand of the Egyptian Papyrus; but it is derived from βιβλα or βυβλα, a plant growing in the marshes of Egypt, εἶδος βοτάνης εὐφρατις παπυρῶ, that bears the resemblance of the Papyrus, as Eustathius explains it. Of this plant the ancients made their cordage: on the top of it there grew fibrous threads resembling hair; and thus Strabo describes it, ψιλή ραβδος ἐπ' ἀκρῇ ἐχέουσα χαιτήν, 'a slender twig, bearing, as it were, hair on the top of it.'

V. 428. *Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er.*] This little particularity is not inserted in vain. Ulysses is ready to engage in a terrible combat. It is therefore very necessary to be curious in the examination of the bow; to be certain that he might depend upon it: if he had observed that it had been decayed through time, his prudence would have furnished him with some other instrument. Eustathius is of opinion that this whole bow was made of horn; because ἰστίς denotes worms that breed in horn. The bow, says that author, was made of horn; and not of wood, like the Scythian bows. This, it must be confessed, is not entirely satisfactory; because the bows were anciently tipt or pointed at the extremities with horn; and to this horn Ulysses may refer. But the other opinion is most probable; and Ovid thus understood it.

V. 440. *Then, as some heav'nly minstrel, &c.*] Eustathius confesses himself to be greatly pleased with this comparison: it is very just, and well suited to the purpose: the strings of the lyre represent the bow-string; and the ease with which the lyrist stretches them, admirably paints the facility with which Ulysses draws the bow. When similitudes are borrowed from an object

entirely different from the subject which they are brought to illustrate, they give us a double satisfaction : as they surprise us by shewing an agreement between such things in which there seems to be the greatest disagreement.

V. 448. *the string let fly*

Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.]

The comparison is not intended to represent the sweetness of the sound, but only the quality and nature of it ; and means a harsh or jarring sound, or somewhat rough, *ὑποτραχυ*, as Eustathius interprets it ; such a sound as the swallow makes when she sings by starts, and not in one even tenour. The swallow is inharmonious ; and Aristophanes uses *χελιδων μυστα* in his *Frogs*, to signify those who are enemies to the muses : and here the poet uses it to denote a shrill, harsh, or jarring sound.

V. 452. *Signs from above ensu'd . . .]* The signal of battle is here given in thunder by Jupiter, as in the eleventh book of the *Iliad* :

‘ E’en Jove, whose thunder spoke his wrath, distill’d
Red drops of blood o’er all the fatal field.’

And again,

‘ That instant Juno and the martial maid
In happy thunders promis’d Greece their aid.’

This prepares us for the greatness of the following action, which is ushered in with thunder from heaven : and we are not surprised to see Ulysses defeat his enemies, when Jupiter declares himself in his favour. Homer calls this thunder a sign and a prodigy : it is a sign, because it predicts the event ; and a prodigy, because the thunder proceeds from a serene sky. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 471. *In sweet repast the present hour employ,
Nor wait till ev’ning]*

This circumstance is very necessary ; Ulysses excites the suitors to supper by day-light, because it would be more easy for him to assault them while they sat at table ; the posture would give him

some advantage : and he adds ' before evening,' because if they had supped by the light of the torch, upon extinguishing it they had greatly embarrassed him ; and perhaps rendered his designs ineffectual through the benefit of the darkness. Neither is it without reason that he proposes singing and music : he does it to draw away their thoughts from any jealousy of intended violence ; and by this method he gives the assault unexpectedly, and begins the slaughter before they are prepared to make any opposition.

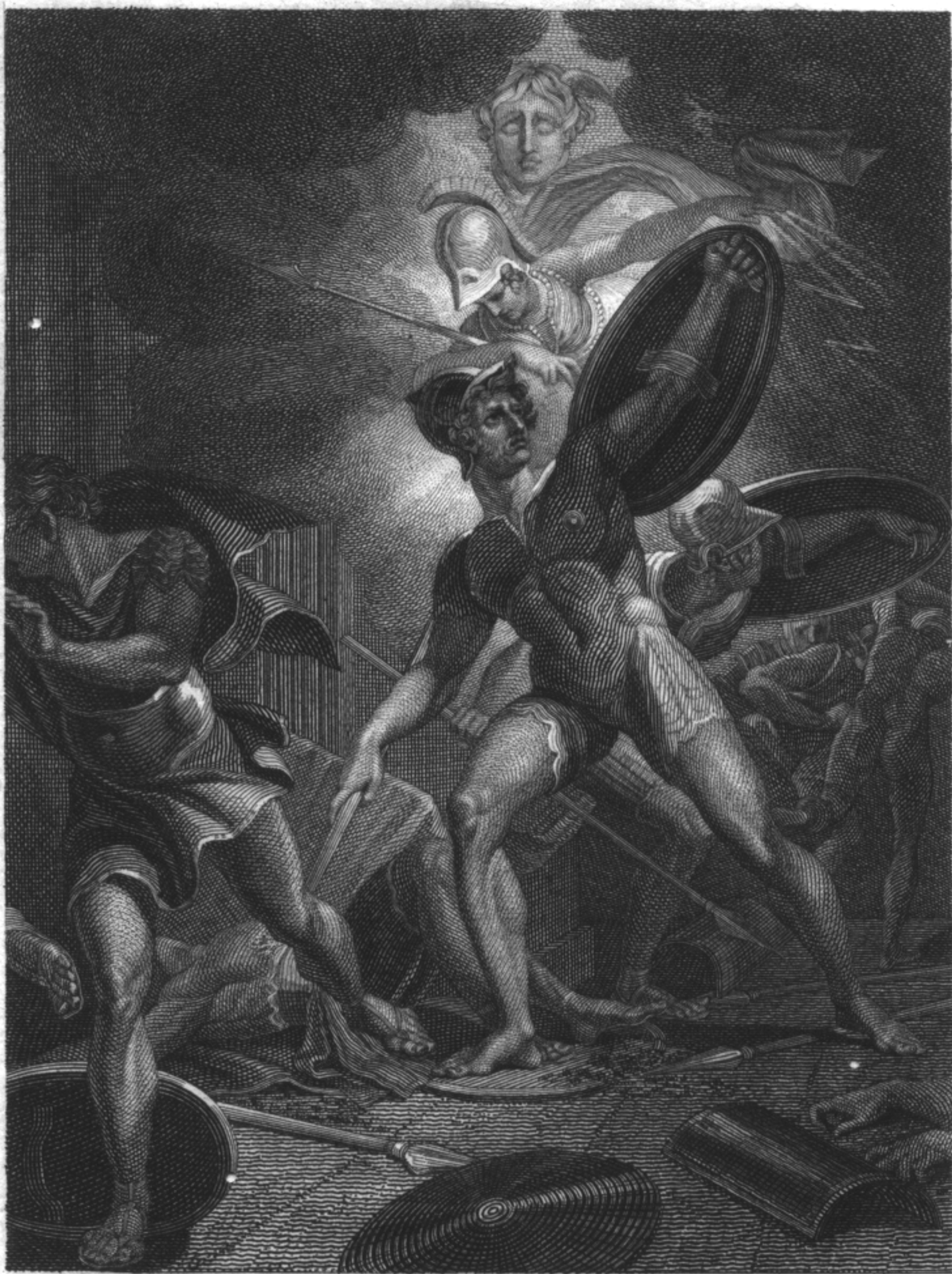
THE
TWENTY-SECOND BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE DEATH OF THE SUITORS.

ULYSSES begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous. He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest. Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumæus and Philætius. Melanthius does the same for the wooers. Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor. The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Phemius are spared. Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed. The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

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Painted by H^d Fuseli R.A.

Engraved by L.^o Schiavonetti.

BOOK XXII.

THEN fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode;
Stript of his rags, he blaz'd out like a god.
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store;
Before his feet the rattling show'r he threw, 5
And thus terrific, to the suitor-crew:

One vent'rous game this hand has won to-day;
Another, princes! yet remains to play:
Another mark our arrow must attain.
Phœbus, assist! nor be the labour vain. 10

Swift as the word the parting arrow sings,
And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings.
Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul!
High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl; 14
E'en then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath;
Chang'd to the deep, the bitter draught of death!
For fate who fear'd amidst a feastful band?
And fate to numbers, by a single hand?
Full through his throat Ulysses' weapon past,
And pierc'd the neck. He falls, and breathes his
last.

The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'erflows,
 A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose;
 Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls:
 Before him spurn'd, the loaded table falls, 24
 And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood
 Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.
 Amaz'd, confounded, as they saw him fall,
 Uprose the throngs tumultuous round the hall:
 O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye: 29
 Each look'd for arms: in vain; no arms were nigh:
 Aim'st thou at princes? (all amaz'd they said)
 Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd;
 Thy erring shaft has made our bravest bleed,
 And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed. 34
 Vultures shall tear thee—Thus incens'd they spoke;
 While each to chance ascrib'd the wond'rous stroke:
 Blind as they were; for death e'en now invades
 His destin'd prey, and wraps them all in shades.
 Then grimly frowning with a dreadful look,
 That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke. 40

Dogs, ye have had your day:—ye fear'd no more
 Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore;
 While to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
 Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay:

Not so content, with bolder frenzy fir'd, 45

E'en to our bed, presumptuous, you aspir'd:

Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,

Or shame of men, or dread of gods above:

Heedless alike of infamy or praise,

Of fame's eternal voice in future days: 50

The hour of vengeance, wretches! now is come;

Impending fate is yours, and instant doom.

Thus dreadful he. Confus'd the suitors stood;

From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood;

Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide;

Alone the bold Eurymachus replied:

If, as thy words impart (he thus began),

Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,

Great are thy wrongs, and much hast thou sus-

tain'd

In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land. 60

The cause and author of those guilty deeds,

Lo! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.

Not love, but wild ambition was his guide:

To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide,

These were his aims;—but juster Jove denied. 65

Since cold in death th' offender lies, O spare

Thy suppliant people, and receive their pray'r!

Brass, gold, and treasures, shall the spoil defray:
 Two hundred oxen ev'ry prince shall pay;
 The waste of years refunded in a day. 70

Till then thy wrath is just.—Ulysses burn'd
 With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd:

All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
 Before your rapines, join'd with all your own,
 If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call: 75

'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all.

Your blood is my demand; your lives the prize,
 Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.

Hence with those coward terms: or fight, or fly,
 This choice is left ye, to resist or die; 80

And die I trust ye shall.—He sternly spoke:

With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.

Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train:

Yon archer, comrades, will not shoot in vain;

But from the threshold shall his darts be sped, 85

(Whoe'er he be) till ev'ry prince lie dead.

Be mindful of yourselves; draw forth your swords,

And to his shafts obtend these ample boards

(So need compels). Then, all united, strive

The bold invader from his post to drive: 90

The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste,

And this mad archer soon have shot his last.

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traitor sword,
 And like a lion rush'd against his lord.
 The wary chief the rushing foe repress; 95
 Who met the point, and forc'd it in his breast:
 His failing hand deserts the lifted sword,
 And prone he falls extended o'er the board!
 Before him wide, in mix'd effusion roll
 Th' untasted viands, and the jovial bowl. 100
 Full through his liver pass'd the mortal wound;
 With dying rage his forehead beats the ground:
 He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
 And the fierce soul to darkness div'd, and hell.

Next bold Amphinomus his arms extends 105
 To force the pass: the godlike man defends.
 Thy spear, Telemachus! prevents th' attack:
 The brazen weapon driving through his back,
 Thence through his breast its bloody passage tore;
 Flat falls he thund'ring on the marble floor, 110
 And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore.
 He left his jav'lin in the dead, for fear
 The long incumbrance of the weighty spear
 To the fierce foe advantage might afford,
 To rush between and use the shorten'd sword. 115
 With speedy ardour to his sire he flies;
 And, Arm, great father! arm (in haste he cries):

Lo hence I run for other arms to wield,
 For missile jav'lins, and for helm and shield:
 Fast by our side let either faithful swain 120
 In arms attend us, and their part sustain.

Haste and return (Ulysses made reply)
 While yet th' auxiliar shafts this hand supply;
 Lest thus alone, encounter'd by an host,
 Driv'n from the gate, th' important pass be lost.

With speed Telemachus obeys; and flies 126
 Where pil'd on heaps the royal armour lies.
 Four brazen helmets, eight refulgent spears,
 And four broad bucklers, to his sire he bears:
 At once in brazen panoply they shone; 130
 At once each servant brac'd his armour on:
 Around their king a faithful guard they stand.
 While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand,
 Chief after chief expir'd at ev'ry wound,
 And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground.
 Soon as his store of flying fates was spent, 136
 Against the wall he set the bow unbent:
 And now his shoulders bear the massy shield;
 And now his hands two beamy jav'lins wield:
 He frowns beneath his nodding plume, that play'd
 O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade. 141

There stood a window near, whence looking down
 From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town.
 A double strength of valves secur'd the place;
 A high and narrow, but the only pass: 145
 The cautious king, with all-preventing care,
 To guard that outlet, plac'd Eumæus there:
 When Agelaüs thus:—Has none the sense
 To mount yon window, and alarm from thence
 The neighbour town? the town shall force the door,
 And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more. 151

Melanthius then:—That outlet to the gate
 So near adjoins, that one may guard the strait.
 But other methods of defence remain;
 Myself with arms can furnish all the train: 155
 Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
 And their own darts shall pierce the prince and king.

He said; and mounting up the lofty stairs,
 Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets
 bears:

All arm, and sudden round the hall appears 160
 A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears.

The hero stands opprest with mighty woe:
 On ev'ry side he sees the labour grow :—
 Oh curst event! and oh unlook'd-for aid!
 Melanthius or the women have betray'd—— 165

Oh my dear son!—The father with a sigh:
Then ceas'd;—the filial virtue made reply:

Falsehood is folly; and 'tis just to own
The fault committed:—this was mine alone.
My haste neglected yonder door to bar; 170
And hence the villain has supplied their war.
Run, good Eumæus, then; and (what before
I thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door:
Learn if by female fraud this deed were done,
Or (as my thought misgives) by Dolius' son. 175

While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
To the high chamber stole the faithless swain:
Not unobserv'd;—Eumæus watchful ey'd;
And thus address'd Ulysses near his side:

The miscreant we suspected takes that way. 180
Him, if this arm be pow'rful, shall I slay?
Or drive him hither, to receive the meed
From thy own hand, of this detested deed?

Not so (replied Ulysses): leave him there.
For us sufficient is another care: -185
Within the structure of this palace wall
To keep inclos'd his masters till they fall.
Go you and seize the felon: backward bind
His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind;

On this, his body by strong cords extend, 190
 And on a column near the roof suspend;
 So studied tortures his vile days shall end.

The ready swains obey'd with joyful haste:
 Behind the felon unperceiv'd they past,
 As round the room in quest of arms he goes 195
 (The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes):
 One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield
 Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,
 Cover'd with dust, with dryness chapt and worn,
 The brass corroded, and the leather torn. 200
 Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he stept,
 Fierce on the villain from each side they leapt,
 Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
 And down reluctant on the pavement threw.
 Active and pleas'd, the zealous swains fulfil 205
 At ev'ry point their master's rigid will:
 First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound;
 Then straiten'd cords involv'd his body round:
 So drawn aloft, athwart the column tied,
 The howling felon swung from side to side. 210

Eumæus scoffing then with keen disdain:
 There pass thy pleasing night, O gentle swain!
 On that soft pillow, from that envied height
 First may'st thou see the springing dawn of light;

So timely rise, when morning streaks the east, 215
To drive thy victims to the suitors' feast.

This said, they left him, tortur'd as he lay;
Secur'd the door, and hasty strode away:
Each, breathing death, resum'd his dang'rous post
Near great Ulysses; four against an host. 220
When lo! descending to her hero's aid,
Jove's daughter, Pallas, war's triumphant maid:
In Mentor's friendly form she join'd his side;
Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cried:

Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend;
Oh ev'ry sacred name in one!—my friend! 226
Early we lov'd, and long our loves have grown:
Whate'er through life's whole series I have done
Or good, or grateful, now to mind recall,
And aiding this one hour, repay it all. 230

Thus he:—but pleasing hopes his bosom warm
Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.
The adverse host the phantom warrior ey'd;
And first, loud threat'ning, Agelaüs cry'd:

Mentor beware; nor let that tongue persuade
Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid; 236
Our force successful shall our threat make good,
And with the sire's and son's commix thy blood.

What hop'st thou here? — Thee first the sword shall
slay ;

Then lop thy whole posterity away : 240

Far hence thy banish'd consort shall we send ;
With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend :
Thus, and thus only, shalt thou join thy friend.

His barb'rous insult e'en the goddess fires ;
Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires : 245

Art thou Ulysses?—where then shall we find
The patient body and the constant mind?
That courage, once the Trojans' daily dread,
Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead?
And where that conduct, which reveng'd the
lust 250

Of Priam's race, and laid proud Troy in dust?
If this, when Helen was the cause, were done,
What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son?
Rise then in combat ; at my side attend ;
Observe what vigour gratitude can lend, 255
And foes how weak, oppos'd against a friend !

She spoke ; but willing longer to survey
The sire and son's great acts, withheld the day ;
By farther toils decreed the brave to try,
And level pois'd the wings of justice : 260

Then with a change of form eludes their sight,
 Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
 And unperceiv'd, enjoys the rising fight.

Damastor's son, bold Agelaüs, leads
 The guilty war; Eurynomus succeeds: 265
 With these, Pisander great Polyctor's son,
 Sage Polybus, and stern Amphimedon,
 With Demoptolemus: these six survive;
 The best of all the shafts had left alive.
 Amidst the carnage desp'rate as they stand, 270
 Thus Agelaüs rous'd the lagging band:

The hour is come, when yon fierce man no more
 With bleeding princes shall bestrow the floor:
 Lo! Mentor leaves him with an empty boast:
 The four remain;—but four against an host. 275
 Let each at once discharge the deadly dart:
 One sure of six shall reach Ulysses' heart:
 Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain:
 The rest must perish, their great leader slain.

Then all at once their mingled lances threw;
 And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew: 281
 In vain! Minerva turn'd them with her breath,
 And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death;
 With deaden'd sound, one on the threshold falls,
 One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls;

The storm past innocent.—The godlike man 286
Now loftier trod, and dreadful thus began:

'Tis now (brave friends) our turn, at once to throw
(So speed 'em heav'n) our jav'lin at the foe.

That impious race to all their past misdeeds 290
Would add our blood:—Injustice still proceeds.

He spoke: at once their fiery lances flew:
Great Demoptolemus, Ulysses slew;
Euryades receiv'd the prince's dart;
The goatherd's quiver'd in Pisander's heart; 295
Fierce Elatus by thine, Eumæus, falls:

Their fall in thunder echoes round the walls.
The rest retreat: the victors now advance;
Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.
Again the foe discharge the steely show'r; 300
Again made frustrate by the virgin-pow'r:

Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall,
Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall;
Some weak, or pond'rous with the brazen head,
Drop harmless, on the pavement sounding dead.

Then bold Amphimedon his jav'lin cast; 306
Thy hand, Telemachus, it lightly raz'd:
And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanc'd
On good Eumæus' shield and shoulder glanc'd:

Not lessen'd of their force (so slight the wound)
 Each sang along, and dropp'd upon the ground.
 Fate doom'd thee next, Eurydamus, to bear
 Thy death, ennobled by Ulysses' spear.
 By the bold son Amphimedon was slain:
 And Polybus renown'd the faithful swain. 315
 Pierc'd through the breast the rude Ctesippus bled,
 And thus Philæti^{us} gloried o'er the dead:

There end thy pompous vaunts and high disdain,
 O sharp in scandal, voluble and vain!
 How weak is mortal pride! To heav'n alone 320
 Th' event of actions and our fates are known:
 Scoffer, behold what gratitude we bear:
 The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.

Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
 And Damastorides that instant fell: 325
 Fast-by Leocritus expiring lay,
 The prince's jav'lin tore its bloody way
 Through all his bowels: down he tumbles prone,
 His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

Now Pallas shines confess'd:—aloft she spreads
 The aim of vengeance o'er their guilty heads; 331
 The dreadful ægis blazes in their eye;
 Amaz'd they see, they tremble, and they fly:

Confus'd, distracted, thro' the rooms they fling,
 Like oxen madden'd by the breese's sting, 335
 When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle
 spring.

Not half so keen, fierce vultures of the chace
 Stoop from the mountains on the feather'd race,
 When the wide field extended snares beset,
 With conscious dread they shun the quiv'ring net:
 No help, no flight; but wounded ev'ry way, 341
 Headlong they drop; the fowlers seize the prey.
 On all sides thus they double wound on wound;
 In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground:
 Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan, 345
 And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Leiodes first before the victor falls;
 The wretched augur thus for mercy calls:
 O, gracious, hear;—nor let thy suppliant bleed:
 Still undishonour'd or by word or deed 350
 Thy house, for me, remains; by me repress'd
 Full oft was check'd th' injustice of the rest:
 Averse they heard me when I counsell'd well;
 Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.
 O spare an augur's consecrated head, 355
 Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead.

Priest as thou art! for that detested band
 Thy lying prophecies deceiv'd the land;
 Against Ulysses have thy vows been made;
 For them, thy daily orisons were paid: 360
 Yet more, e'en to our bed thy pride aspires:—
 One common crime one common fate requires.

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he
 took

Which Agelaüs' dying hand forsook;
 Full thro' his neck the weighty falchion sped: 365
 Along the pavement roll'd the mutt'ring head.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spar'd;
 Phemius, the sweet, the heav'n-instructed, bard.
 Beside the gate the rev'rend minstrel stands;
 The lyre, now silent, trembling in his hands; 370
 Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
 To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,
 Where oft Laertes holy vows had paid,
 And oft Ulysses smoking victims laid.
 His honour'd harp with care he first set down,
 Between the laver and the silver throne; 376
 Then prostrate, stretch'd before the dreadful man,
 Persuasive, thus, with accent soft began:

O king! to mercy be thy soul inclin'd,
 And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind. 380

A deed like this thy future fame would wrong:
 For dear to gods and men is sacred song.
 Self-taught I sing;—by heav'n, and heav'n alone,
 The genuine seeds of poesy are sown;
 And (what the gods bestow) the lofty lay, 385
 To gods alone, and godlike worth, we pay.
 Save then the poet, and thyself reward;
 'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record.
 That here I sung, was force and not desire;
 This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire:
 And let thy son attest, nor sordid pay, 391
 Nor servile flatt'ry, stain'd the moral lay.

The moving words Telemachus attends,
 His sire approaches, and the bard defends:—
 O mix not, father, with those impious dead 395
 The man divine; forbear that sacred head:
 Medon, the herald, too our arms may spare;
 Medon, who made my infancy his care:
 If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give
 Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live. 400

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
 Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,
 Wrapt in a new slain ox's ample hide:
 Swift at the word he cast his screen aside, 404

Sprung to the prince, embrac'd his knee with tears,
And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears :

O prince ! O friend ! lo here thy Medon stands ;
Ah stop the hero's unresisted hands,
Incens'd too justly by that impious brood,
Whose guilty glories now are set in blood. 410

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye :
Be bold ; on friendship and my son rely :
Live, an example for the world to read,
How much more safe the good than evil deed
Thou, with the heav'n-taught bard, in peace resort
From blood and carnage to yon open court: 416
Me other work requires—With tim'rous awe
From the dire scene th' exempted two withdraw ;
Scarce sure of life, look round,—and trembling
move

To the bright altars of protector Jove. 420

Meanwhile Ulysses search'd the dome to find
If yet there live of all th' offending kind.

Not one !—complete the bloody tale he found ;
All steep'd in blood, all gasping on the ground.
So, when by hollow shores the fisher train 425
Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main,
And scarce the meshy toils the copious draught
contain,

All naked of their element, and bare,
 The fishes pant, and gasp in thinner air;
 Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiff'ning prey,
 Till the warm sun exhales their soul away. 431

And now the king commands his son to call
 Old Euryclea to the deathful hall:

The son observant not a moment stays;
 The aged governess with speed obeys: 435

The sounding portals instant they display;
 The matron moves, the prince directs the way.

On heaps of death the stern Ulysses stood,
 All black with dust, and cover'd thick with blood,
 So the grim lion from the slaughter comes: 440

Dreadful he glares, and terribly he foams;
 His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er,
 His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
 The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed complete, 445
 A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd:

The hero check'd her, and compos'dly said:

Woman, experienc'd as thou art, controul
 Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul.
 T' insult the dead is cruel and unjust; 450
 Fate, and their crime, have sunk them to the dust.

Nor heeded these the censure of mankind;
 The good and bad were equal in their mind.
 Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
 And each now wails, an unlamented shade. 455
 But thou sincere! oh Euryclea, say,
 What maids dishonour us, and what obey?

Then she:—In these thy kingly walls remain
 (My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
 Taught by my care to cull the fleece, or weave,
 And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive: 461
 Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
 Nor me, nor chaste Penelope, obey;
 Nor fits it that Telemachus command
 (Young as he is) his mother's female band. 465
 Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
 Where slumbers soft now close the royal eye;
 There wake her with the news—the matron cried.
 Not so (Ulysses more sedate replied),
 Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty
 deeds.— 470

In haste the matron parts: the king proceeds:
 Now to dispose the dead the care remains
 To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains;
 Th' offending females to that task we doom,
 To wash, to scent, and purify the room. 475

These (ev'ry table cleans'd, and ev'ry throne,
 And all the melancholy labour done),
 Drive to yon court, without the palace-wall:
 There the revenging sword shall smite them all;
 So with the suitors let them mix in dust, 480
 Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust.

He said:—the lamentable train appear:
 Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear;
 Each heav'd her mournful burden, and beneath
 The porch depos'd the ghastly heaps of death. 485
 The chief severe, compelling each to move,
 Urg'd the dire task, imperious, from above.
 With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er;
 (The swains unite their toil) the walls, the floor,
 Wash'd with th' effusive wave, are purg'd of gore.
 Once more the palace set in fair array, 491
 To the base court the females take their way;
 There compass'd close between the dome and wall,
 (Their life's last scene) they trembling wait their
 fall.

Then thus the prince:—To these shall we afford
 A fate so pure, as by the martial sword? 496
 To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame
 And base revilers of our house and name?

Thus speaking, on the circling wall he strung
 A ship's tough cable, from a column hung; 500
 Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
 Whence no contending foot could reach the
 ground.

Their heads above connected in a row,
 They beat the air with quiv'ring feet below:
 Thus on some tree, hung struggling in the snare,
 The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air. 506
 Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
 The empty corpse to waver with the wind.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
 Their bloody work: they lopp'd away the man,
 Morsel for dogs! then trimm'd with brazen sheers
 The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears;
 His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel:
 He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell—

They wash, and to Ulysses take their way; 515
 So ends the bloody bus'ness of the day.

To Euryclea then addrest the king:
 Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
 To purge the palace: then the queen attend,
 And let her with her matron-train descend; 520
 The matron-train with all the virgin band
 Assemble here, to learn their lord's command.

Then Euryclea:—Joyful I obey:

But cast those mean dishonest rags away:

Permit me first thy royal robes to bring: 525

Ill suits this garb the shoulders of a king.

‘Bring sulphur straight and fire’ (the monarch
cries).

She hears, and at the word obedient flies.

With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,

He purg’d the walls and blood-polluted rooms.

Again the matron springs with eager pace, 531

And spreads her lord’s return from place to place.

They hear, rush forth, and instant round him stand;

A gazing throng, a torch in ev’ry hand.

They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace

Each humbly kiss’d his knee, or hand, or face: 536

He knows them all; in all such truth appears,

E’en he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

SELECT NOTES

TO

BOOK XXII.

WE are now come to the great event or catastrophe of the *Odyssey*; which is the destruction of the suitors. The manner by which the poet conducts it, has been praised and censured: by some, as noble and heroic; by others, as romantic and incredible. It is therefore highly necessary to vindicate Homer, in the chief action of the whole poem: that he may not be found culpable, in the place where he ought to be the most exact, and draw his hero to the best advantage. The objection made against this decisive action is, that the poet makes Ulysses perform impossibilities; no one person, with such small assistance, being able to destroy above an hundred enemies. It is no answer to say that Pallas descends to aid Ulysses; for it has been already proved, that all incidents which require a divine probability, should be so disengaged from the action, that they may be subtracted from it, without destroying it; whereas this action is essential to it. No less a critic than Longinus, chap. vii. condemns Homer; for, enumerating the faults of the *Odyssey*, he thus proceeds: 'To these may be added the absurdities he commits, in the account of the destruction of Penelope's suitors.' And Scaliger, lib. v. of his *Poetics*, is of the same opinion: 'Ulysses interfecit arcu procos; inter quos et ipsum tantillum esset intervalli. Quare omnes simul in eum impetum non fecerunt?' The strength of this objection lies in the omission of the suitors in not rushing at once upon Ulysses in an united body. Now this was impossible: he stood upon the threshold in a narrow pass; and by this advantage he was able to make it good against a great inequality of numbers. It is not difficult to bring instances of a like nature from undoubted history: Cocles alone defended the bridge over the Ty-

ber against the whole army of Porsena, and stood immoveable till the Romans broke it down behind him; and Leonidas, the Spartan general, defended the pass of Thermopylæ with a small number, against three millions of Persians led by Xerxes; and, if he had not been betrayed, he would have probably defeated his whole army. In both these instances there was a greater inequality of numbers, than between Ulysses and the suitors. The reader will be reconciled to the probability of these relations, if he considers that the whole business of war was anciently decided by mere strength of body. Fire-arms now set all men upon a nearer level: but in these early ages, the strongest person was the greatest hero: a man of superior and uncommon strength drove his enemies before him like an army of boys, and with as much facility. From this observation it is evident, that Homer scarce transgresses the bounds of historic truth, when he describes Achilles chasing whole squadrons of Trojans. He wrote according to the manners of his times, and drew after the life; though sometimes he improved a feature to give grace to the picture of his hero: thus in the Scripture, from the mere advantage of strength, we see a single Goliath defy the whole armies of Israel.

Rapin commends the conduct of Homer in bringing about the destruction of the suitors. The unravelling the whole Odyssey (says that author) by their deaths, is very great, and very becoming an hero: that whole story is dressed up in colours so decent, and at the same time so noble, that antiquity can hardly match any part of the narration: here Homer has displayed himself to the best advantage. I wish Rapin had given his reasons; and not run into a general commendation: but we shall be sufficiently convinced of the judgment of Homer in describing the suitors falling chiefly by Ulysses, if we consider the nature of epic poetry. The chief action is to be performed by the hero of the poem. Thus Hector falls by Achilles; Turnus by Æneas. The death of the suitors is the chief action of the Odyssey: and therefore it is necessary to be executed by Ulysses; for if any other person had performed it, that person would have done an action more noble than the hero of the poem, and eclipsed his glory. It is for the same reason that the poet refuses all easy me-

thods to re-establish Ulysses: he throws him into difficulties which he is to surmount by his own prowess and magnanimity. Homer might easily have raised an army, and placed Ulysses at the head of it; but the more difficult way being most conducive to his honour, he rejects all easy methods;—shews him struggling with infinite hazards, out of which he extricates himself personally by his wisdom and courage. By this means he completes the character of his hero, leaves a noble image of his worth upon the minds of the spectators, and makes him go off the stage with the utmost applause.

V. 1. *Then fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode, &c.*] Plato was particularly struck with the beauty of these lines: in his Dialogue intitled *Ion*, p. 145, Socrates thus speaks: ‘When you repeat the verses of Homer emphatically, and ravish the whole audience, whether it be the passage where he sings how Ulysses leaps upon the threshold, discovers himself to the suitors, and pours his arrows before his feet; or where Achilles rushes upon Hector; or where he paints the lamentations of Hecuba, Priam, or Andromache, tell me, are you any longer master of your own passions? are you not transported? and ravished with divine fury, think yourself present at the very actions, either in Ithaca, or Troy?’ It must indeed be allowed, that Homer here paints to the life: we see Ulysses, his motion, his attitude, and the noble fury with which he begins the onset. The poet interests us in the cause of his hero; and we fight on his side against his enemies.

Eustathius observes, that instead of $\xi\alpha\chi$ the Æolians wrote $\beta\epsilon\alpha\chi$: an observation of too little importance to have been regarded, if he had not given us a fragment of Sappho as a proof of it:

Τις δ' ἀγροιώτις δαλγεί τοον
 Οὐκ ἐπιστάμεν τα βρακὲ' ἐλκεῖν
 Ἐπὶ τῶν σφυρῶν;

which he thus explains:

‘What rustic beauty drest in awkward charms
 Detains my lover from his Sappho’s arms?’

The circumstance of throwing the arrows before his feet is not inserted without a reason. Ulysses could reach them thence with more facility and expedition, than if they had hung at his shoulder in the quiver.

V. 10. *Phœbus, assist!*] Ulysses addresses a prayer to Apollo to give success to his present enterprise. He directs it to him, because he is the god of archery; and he concludes in four words, in compliance with the exigence of the time, which will not permit him to speak at large. This prayer to Apollo confirms my observation, that Penelope proposed the trial of the bow in honour of that deity. And we find that it was customary, from a remarkable passage in the Iliad, lib. iv.

‘ But first, to speed thy shaft, address thy vow
To Lycian Phœbus with the silver bow :
And swear the firstlings of the flock to pay
On Zelia’s altars, to the god of day.’

It is from the urgency of the time that the speech of Ulysses, as well as the prayer, is concise. It would have been very injudicious, when he was ready to assault his enemies unexpectedly, to have prefaced the onset with a long oration: this would have given them an alarm, and time to make an opposition.

V. 22. *A stream of gore burst spouting*] The word in the original is *αυλος*, which commonly signifies a pipe or musical instrument. The ancients (observes Eustathius) used it to denote a fountain; here therefore it implies a flux or fountain of blood; *κρηнос, εξακρόθισμα αιματος*. The word therefore very happily paints the blood spouting from the nostrils, as from a fountain: and in this sense, it gives us a full image of the nature of the wound.

V. 35. *Thus incens’d they spoke;*
While each to chance ascrib’d the wond’rous stroke.]

This passage was looked upon as spurious by the ancients; for they thought it impossible that all the suitors should speak the same sentiment, as by compact, like a chorus in a tragedy. They appealed to the custom of Homer himself, who continually wrote

Ωδε δε τις ειπεσχεν.

Eustathius answers, that the poet speaks thus confusedly, to represent the confusion of the suitors at the death of Antinous. Dacier defends him by saying, that all the suitors imagined that Antinous was slain by accident: and therefore the whole assembly having the same sentiment, the poet might ascribe to every member of it the same expression.

V. 64. *To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide.*] This expression is judiciously inserted; and with good reason put into the mouth of one of the suitors, namely Eurymachus. The poet is now punishing them for their crimes. It is therefore very necessary that the reader should be satisfied that they deserve punishment: for if it be not an act of justice, it is murder. The poet therefore brings them all confessing themselves guilty by the mouth of Eurymachus: their crime is the intended murder of Telemachus, and the usurpation of the throne of Ulysses. If this had not been set in a clear light, there might have been room for a suspicion that Ulysses inflicted a punishment too great for the guilt of the suitors. For was it a crime that deserved death, to aim at the marriage of Penelope? This is not to be supposed; for they took her to be a widow, and might therefore without a crime ask her in marriage. Was death due for the waste and profusion of the riches of Ulysses? This might have been redressed, by a full repayment, and a just equivalent. Homer therefore, to shew that there is a cause for the severity of the punishment, sets their crimes in open view; which are an intentional murder, and an actual treason. The place likewise where he inserts this circumstance is well chosen, viz. in the place where the punishment is related: and by this method we acknowledge the equity of it. It is true, Eurymachus throws the guilt upon Antinous as the chief offender. But all the suitors have been his associates, and approved of all his violent and bloody designs through the Odyssey, and therefore are justly involved in the same punishment; so that Ulysses punishes rebellious subjects by the authority of a king. Homer likewise observes justice in the death of Antinous; he is the first in guilt, and the first that falls by his hero's hands.

V. 91. *The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste.*] It is impos-

sible but that the suitors must have had many friends among the Ithacans. Interest or ill-humour engages men in faction. But this is not the full import of the sense of Homer. The Ithacans were ignorant that Ulysses was returned: and no wonder therefore if they engaged in defence of the princes of their land, against a stranger and a beggar; for such in appearance was Ulysses.

V. 108. *The brazen weapon driving through his back.*] Eustathius, and Spondanus from him, interpret this passage very much to the disadvantage of the courage of Telemachus: they observe that he is yet new to the horrors of war, and therefore wanting the heart to meet his enemy in the front, gives him this wound between the shoulders; that as soon as he has given the blow, out of fear he leaves the spear in the wound (an action as disreputable, as to throw away the shield in battle); and lastly, that it is fear that suggests to his mind the expedient to fetch the arms, a pretext to be distant from danger. But it is not difficult to defend Telemachus. Amphinomus was assaulting Ulysses; and consequently his back was turned towards Telemachus; and this occasions the wound in that part. This combat is not a combat of honour, where points of ceremony are observed: Telemachus was therefore at liberty to destroy his enemy by any methods, without any imputation of cowardice; especially considering the inequality of the parties. Neither is it out of fear that he quits his spear; but from a dictate of wisdom: he is afraid lest some of the suitors should attack him while he is disengaging it, and take him at an advantage, while he has no weapon to use in his own defence. Besides, he has no farther occasion for it: he hastes away to provide other arms; not only for himself, but for Ulysses and his friends: and this is so far from being the suggestion of fear, that it is the result of wisdom.

There is some difficulty in the expression ἀποπρηνεῖ τυψας. The meaning of it is, lest he should receive a descending blow: the word is an adjective, and Eustathius tells us, that χεῖρ is to be understood. I should rather choose φασγανῶ, which immediately precedes: it being as good sense to say, a wound is given by a descending sword, as a descending hand.

V. 117. arm (*in haste he cries*).] Homer almost

constantly gives the epithet *πτεροειρτα* to *πτερ* :—‘winged words.’ Plutarch, in his treatise upon Garrulity, gives us the meaning of it. A word (says that author) while it remains unspoken is a secret: but being communicated, it changes its name into common rumour: it is then ‘flown’ from us: and this is the reason why Homer calls words ‘winged:’ he that lets a bird fly from his hand, does not easily catch it again; and he that lets a word slip from his tongue cannot recall it; it flies abroad, and flutters from place to place every moment. It has indeed in some passages a still closer meaning: when a person speaks with precipitation, the epithet expresses the swiftness of the speech; the words are winged: it is here applied with particular propriety; Telemachus asks a question in the compass of four lines, and receives an answer in two from Ulysses; the time not allowing any delay.

V. 142. *There stood a window near, whence looking down,
From o’er the porch, appear’d the subject town.]*

The word in the Greek is *οπισθοθυρη*, ‘janua superior:’ and it is likewise used a little lower. It has given great trouble to the commentators to explain the situation of these two passages. Dacier imagines that by the former there was a descent into the court-yard, and so to the street. But this cannot be true: for Ageläus exhorting his associates to seize this passage, makes use of the word *αναβαινω*: which signifies to ‘ascend,’ and not to ‘descend’ into the court-yard: besides, he bids them raise the people by ‘shouting to them;’ which seems to imply, that this place overlooked the streets, from whence a shout might be heard by the people. *Οπισθοθυρη* (observes Eustathius) is *θυρη τις ἢν ὀρνυται τις θύλων ἰδεῖν ἐκείθεν*; that is, ‘a door by which a person ascends to obtain a prospect.’ This probably led to the roof of the porch of the palace fronting the street; whence a person standing in the open air, and shouting, might raise the city: or, as for greater clearness it is here translated, a window; which answers all these purposes.

But there is still a difficulty arising from the word *λαυρη*; which is thus solved by Eustathius: *λαυρη εἶναι ὁ πρὸς τὴν οπισθοθυρὴν ἄγυρ σπινωπός*; that is, a narrow passage leading to this private window or door: and he afterwards interprets it by *σπινὴ ὁδός*.

From what has been observed, it appears evidently that there was another passage to the upper apartments of the palace; for this was guarded by Eumæus, and was inaccessible: and consequently Melanthius conveys the arms to the suitors by some other stair-case. This Homer expresses by *αναγωγὰς μεγαλοῖο*:—the former word is very well explained by Hesychius; it signifies the passages of the palace leading from chamber to chamber, or the *διοδοὶ* of the apartments: *μεγὰρ* properly denotes a rupture; and here represents the openings of the passages from room to room. The ancients thought this whole passage so obscure, that they drew a plan of these inward passages of the palace, as Eustathius informs us: in this they figured the porch, the higher aperture, the other stair-case, and the room where the arms were laid. But Dacier starts another difficulty: if Melanthius could go up to the room where the arms lay, why could he not go thence into the courts of the palace, and raise the city? The answer is, because the arms were placed in an inward apartment, and there was no passage thence into the palace-yard. Her mistake arose from her opinion that there was an entry into the palace by the *αερόθυρον*: which opinion is refuted in the beginning of this annotation. If indeed Telemachus had brought down the arms this way, then there must have been a passage for Melanthius to the place from whence Agclæus bids him raise the city; for if Telemachus had passed to the armoury by it, why might not Melanthius from it? But this is not the case: for this door or window is not mentioned till Telemachus has furnished Ulysses and his friends with armour; and consequently Homer cannot intend that we should understand that Telemachus ascended to the armoury by it.

V. 159. *Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears.*] Aristarchus, remarks Eustathius, blamed this description as incredible; for how could one person be able to carry such a load of armour at one time? But we are not to make this supposition: the poet speaks indefinitely, and leaves us at liberty to conjecture that Melanthius brought them at several times: thus a little lower we find him going again for arms to furnish the rest of the suitors.

V. 172. *Run, good Eumæus, &c.*] This passage, where Tele-

machus bids **Eumæus** go and see who brings the arms, proves that **Telemachus** did not before absent himself from the battle out of cowardice: here he chooses to partake the danger with **Ulysses**, and sends **Eumæus** and **Philæti**us to execute his orders; a sign that he does not consult his safety at the expence of his honour. **EUSTATHIUS**.

But it may seem extraordinary, that **Ulysses** and **Telemachus** should be in doubt to know the person who brought the arms to the suitors; especially when **Agelæus** had held a public conference with **Melanthius** in order to it; but, answers **Eustathius**, they spoke with a low voice, and at a proper distance from **Ulysses**. It may also be objected, that **Melanthius** could not possibly bring the arms without the observation of **Ulysses** and his friends. To solve this difficulty we must have recourse to the second private door, or *opœobuyn*, mentioned in a former annotation: by this passage he ascends and descends without a discovery; that passage standing in such a situation, as not to be visible to those who were on the opposite side of the palace. What may seem to contradict this observation is, what **Homer** afterwards adds; for he directly tells us, that **Eumæus** observed that the person who brought the arms was **Melanthius**; but that expression may only imply, that he saw **Melanthius** going from the rest of the company, and hasting towards that ascent, and therefore justly concludes him to be the person.

V. 187. *To keep inclos'd his masters*] It may be asked, when **Eumæus** retires from the guard of the passage, what hinders the suitors from seizing it, and by it giving notice to the city of their danger? What **Ulysses** here says obviates this objection. He tells **Eumæus**, that he and **Telemachus** will defend it against all the efforts of his enemies: by this expression he gives us to understand, that **Telemachus** shall post himself in the place of **Eumæus**, and make it good till he has executed justice upon **Melanthius**.

V. 197. *One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield.*] We see **Melanthius** after a diligent search finds only one helm and one shield; and the shield is described as almost spoiled with age. Hence **Eustathius** gathers that there were no more left in the ar-

moury ; for it is probable that Melanthius would not have returned with so few arms if he could have found more ; nor would he have brought the decayed shield, if he could have supplied himself with a stronger. So that all the arms of Ulysses were seventeen helmets ; twelve at first delivered to the suitors by Melanthius, one more he was now bringing, and Ulysses and his friends were in possession of four : there were the same number of shields, and twenty spears ; twelve given to the suitors, and eight to the assistants of Ulysses. This was his private armoury for the defence of his palace ; and we are not to conclude that these were the whole arms of the nation ; there probably was a public repository for armour for the public use of their armies against their enemies.

V. 262. *Perch'd like a swallow*] We have seen the deities, both in the Iliad and Odyssey, changing themselves into the shape of birds : thus lib. vii. v. 67 of the Iliad,

‘ Th’ Athenian maid, and glorious god of day,
With silent joy the settling hosts survey ;
In form like vultures, on the beech’s height
They sit conceal’d, and wait the future fight.’

This perhaps may be the occasion of all such fictions : the superstition of the heathen world induced the ancients to believe that the appearance of any bird in a critical hour was a sign of the presence of a divinity ; and by degrees they began to persuade themselves, that the gods appeared to them in the form of those birds. Hence arose all the honours paid to augurs, and the reliance upon divination drawn from the flight of birds ; and almost every deity had a bird sacred to him ; the eagle to Jupiter, the peacock to Juno, &c. Pallas here takes the form of a swallow, because it is a domestic bird ; and therefore may be said to appear within the walls of the palace with most probability.

V. 298. *the victors now advance ;
Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.*]

The danger beginning to abate by the fall of the chief of the enemy, Ulysses advances from his stand. There was a necessity for

this conduct. Ulysses and his three assistants had killed four enemies with their spears; and consequently the poet was obliged to supply them with fresh weapons; otherwise, if they had discharged their spears once more, they must have been left naked and defenceless, having only two apiece brought by Telemachus. This observation shews the exactness which Homer maintains in his relation.

V. 328. *The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.*] This refers to a passage in the latter end of the twentieth book of the Odyssey, where Ctesippus throws the foot of a bullock at Ulysses. Philætius here gives him a mortal wound with his spear, and tells him it is a return for the foot of the bullock. Eustathius informs us, that this became a proverb, *τετοιοι αντι πους ζειννισιν*, to express a return of evil for evil; the like may be observed of the death of Antinous, who was killed as he lifted the bowl to drink:

Πολλα μεταξυ πελει κυλικῶ και χειλεῶ αμρυ.

Which is exactly rendered by our proverb, 'Many things happen between the cup and the lip.' Thus likewise the kindness of the Cyclop was used proverbially, to denote a severe injury disguised under a seeming civility; that monster having promised Ulysses mercy, but it was only the mercy to devour him last. These little instances prove the great veneration the ancients had for Homer.

V. 335. *Like oxen, &c.*] The fury of the battle being now over; Homer pauses with the action; and letting his fancy rove in search of foreign ornaments, beautifies and enlivens the horrors of it with two similitudes, drawn from subjects very distant from the terrors they are brought to illustrate. The former, of an herd of cattle, represents the confusion and affright of the suitors; the latter, of the birds, their weakness and unavailing flight. The gadfly shews the fury and close pursuit of Ulysses and his assistants; the hawks, their courage, and superior power. EUSTATHIUS.

The latter simile from the hawks, affords some curiosity in regard to the ancient manner of that sport. It is evident, says Dacier, that this passage is an instance, that flying birds of prey, in the nature of our hawking, was practised by the ancients: the

nets, called by Homer *νεφτα*, were fixed in the plain ground; the fowlers with their falcons took their station upon the adjoining eminences: when the birds, driven from this rising ground, flew to the plain, they met with the nets, and endeavouring to escape them, crouded into flocks: then the hawk or vulture was loosed, and descending upon his prey, slew them in multitudes; for the birds were incapable of resisting, and at the same time were afraid of the nets, and therefore could not escape. This is the reason why the fowlers are said to rejoice at the sport: a plain indication, that the poet intended to describe the sportsman's flying his bird at the prey. Monsieur Dacier has a pretty observation upon this sport; and shews us that the ancients were used to take even deer with nets, by flying at them birds of prey, in conformity to this description of Homer. Minerva, in this similitude, is the bird of prey descending from the mountain; for she it is who scatters the suitors by displaying her ægis from the roof of the palace. This is the opinion of Eustathius: but in the winding up of the comparison, Homer plainly by the vulture denotes Ulysses and his assistants (though perhaps not exclusively of the goddess), for in the application he writes,

Ὡς ἀγὰ τοὶ μνηστῆρας ἐπισσυνένοι κατὰ δῶμα
 Τυπλον.

V. 371. *Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
 To Jove's inviolable altar nigh, &c.]*

This altar of Jupiter Hercaeus stood in the palace-yard; so called from *ἔρα*, 'the out-wall inclosing the court-yard.' It stood in the open air, where they sacrificed to Jupiter the guardian, or protector; and within the palace to Zeus *ἑστιαρχ*.

Jupiter was worshipped under the same name by the Romans. Thus Ovid:

'Cui nihil Hercaei profuit ara Jovis.'

The altar mentioned by Virgil, *Æneid.* ii. was of the same nature: to which Priam fled at the taking of Troy:

'Uncover'd but by heav'n, there stood in view
 An altar; near the hearth a laurel grew,

Dodder'd with age ; whose bows encompass round
The household gods, and shade the holy ground.'

These altars were places of sanctuary ; and by flying to them the person was thought to be under the immediate protection of the deity, and therefore in some cases inviolable. The same practice prevailed amongst the Jews ; for we find frequently in the Scriptures that it was customary to fly to the altar as to a place of refuge ; which is evident from the expression of 'laying hold on the horns of the altar.'* This is the reason why Phemius entertains an intention to fly to the altar of Jupiter Hercæus. Plutarch, in his treatise upon Music, informs us, that Demodocus was reported to have wrote a poem, intitled, 'The destruction of Troy ;' and Phemius another, called, 'The return of the Grecian captains :' but by these poets Homer probably means only himself, who was author of two poems, the Iliad, and the Odyssey. Homer (remarks Eustathius) plainly shews us the notion he had of the great qualifications that were necessary to form a good poet. He must sing of men and gods ; that is, be thoroughly acquainted with all things both human and divine ; he must be *αὐτοδίδακτος*, or 'self-taught ;' that is, as we express it, he must be a genius ; he must have a natural ability, which is indeed to be improved, but not capable of being learned, by study : he adds, that besides this felicity of nature, he must have an heavenly inspiration : this implies that he must have a kind of enthusiasm, an elevation of soul which is not to be obtained by labour and industry, and consequently is the gift of heaven. Thus Pindar (Olymp. ii) :

.....σοφας ὁ πῦλ-
λ' εἰδως φῦα.
Μαθόντες δὲ, λαβροί
Παγλωσσία, κορακες ὡς,
Ἀκράντα γαρυετον.

* The bards, whom true poetic flame inspires,
Receive from nature more than human fires :
In vain from art alone they tune the voice ;
Like crows they croak, nor is it song, but noise.'

This is the *Mens Divinior* of Horace: by industry men may become great scholars and philosophers; but no man was ever a great poet, without being in the strictest sense a great genius. I will only add, that Aristotle in his *Rhet.* i. 7, quotes this hemistic *αὐτοδίδακτος*, &c. as an instance that natural are more excellent than acquired abilities. He gives the reason of it, namely, because they are more uncommon, and not to be obtained by human industry. Maximus Tyrius has a criticism upon it. How (objects that author) can it be said that the poet is self-taught, if the gods teach him to sing? The answer is easy, Homer means that he has no human instructor. It is observable that Maximus Tyrius erroneously quotes the verse, *Dissert.* xxii. for he writes, *Θεοὶ δὲ μοι ὡπάσαν ὁμῶς*, instead of

..... Θεὸς δὲ μοι ἐν φρεσὶν οἶμας
Παντοίας ἀνεφύσεν

He likewise puts the words in the mouth of Demodocus, which are here spoken by Phemius. He undoubtedly quoted by memory.

What Homer adds after all this, to raise the character of his poet, is very remarkably moral: That he never turned his talents to flattery; nor was it voluntarily that he served or entertained unworthy men, but was merely compelled to it by their violence.

V. 413. *Live, an example for the world to read,
 How much more safe the good than evil deed.]*

The moral intended to be taught by the fable of the *Odyssey* is, to shew virtue, though long in distress, at length triumphant; and vice, though long successful, unfortunate in the conclusion: it is to this effect that Ulysses here speaks; and to give his words more weight, he throws them into a sentence. It is with excellent judgment that it is here placed by Homer: the punishment is no sooner over but Ulysses declares the equity of it. He speaks to all mankind; and lays it down as an universal truth, that virtue is to be preferred before vice: and invites us to the practice of the former, by shewing the success of it in his own victory; and deters us from the latter, by representing the ill consequences of it in the destruction of the suitors.

V. 425. *So when by hollow shores the fisher train
Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main.]*

The ancients (remarks Eustathius) observe that this is the only place where Homer manifestly speaks of catching fish with nets: for those words, lib. v. ver. 595, of the Iliad,

‘.....and sweep away
Sons, sires, and wives, an undistinguish’d prey;

which in the Greek is expressed by *αψισι λινὰ αλοῖτε παναγρε*, may be applied to the taking of beasts or birds by nets; and consequently ought not to be appropriated to fishing. Thus it is evident that this art was practised very anciently amongst the Grecians; it was likewise known early to the Hebrews and Egyptians. Thus Isaiah xix. 8. ‘The fishers (of Egypt) shall mourn, all they that cast the angle into the brook shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.’ And that they fished the seas with nets is evident from Ezekiel xxvi. 5. ‘It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea.’ The comparison is very just; and the last line of it gives a peculiar honour and distinction to Ulysses: that hero is the sun who kills the suitors, in application of the similitude.

V. 440. *So the grim lion, &c.]* Eustathius agrees with an observation which has been made concerning the similitudes of the Odyssey, lib. xvi. He here remarks that comparisons are as rare in the Odyssey as they are frequent in the Iliad; and that the difference arises from the difference of the subjects. The subject of the Iliad is great, and therefore properly illustrated by noble images, and a variety of sublime comparisons: the subject of the Odyssey requires to be related in a less exalted style, and with greater simplicity. This book is an undeniable testimony of the truth of this observation: the story of it approaches nearer to the nature of the Iliad than any other book of the Odyssey: and we find it is more adorned with comparisons than almost all the rest of the poem.

V. 450. *T’insult the dead is cruel and unjust.]* The word in the original is *ολολυζε*, and here signifies a voice of joy. In other places it is used to denote a sorrowful lamentation. See note on

v. 573 of the third Odyssey. I am wonderfully pleased with the noble sentiment of Ulysses contained in these lines. It is full of piety and humanity: good nature feels for the sufferings of any of its fellow creatures. Even in punishment we are to remember, that those we punish are men, and inflict it as a necessary justice, not as a triumph. Such here is the conduct of Ulysses: he is so far from rejoicing in his success, that he restrains others from it; and seems to be a mourner at the funeral of his enemies. He falls into the same thought with Job, xxxi. 29. 'If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: if I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul,' &c.

Were a prince, who makes war for glory, to stand upon a field of battle immediately after victory, amidst the horrors of the dead, and the groans of the dying; it would surely mortify his ambition to see such horrible monuments of his glory. If the death of thousands of brave men were weighed in a scale against a name, a popular empty breath of a multitude, and if reason held the balance, how easily would the disproportion be discovered?

V. 453. *The good and bad were equal in their mind.*] There is some obscurity in these words, 'they neither respected the good nor the bad man;' or, as Homer expresses it,

Οὐ κακὸν ἔδε μὲν εὐθλόν. (v. 415.)

A reverence is due to a good man, and consequently it is a crime to deny it: but why should it be objected to the suitors as a fault that they despised the bad man, whose actions deserved to be despised? Eustathius answers, κακός may signify ταπεινός, or a person of a low condition, the poor man, or the stranger; and this justified the assertion: but perhaps the poet uses it to shew that they despised and outraged all men universally without distinction, whether persons of probity or dishonesty; they considered not the condition of others, but were insolent to all mankind.

V. 464. *Nor fits it that Telemachus command
(Young as he is) his mother's female band.]*

This, remarks Eustathius, is an instance of the maternal wisdom

of Penelope; and at the same time a vindication of Telemachus for not restraining the insolence and immodesty of these female servants; they were out of his jurisdiction, and immediately under the protection of Penelope. But is not this removal of the fault from Telemachus an imputation upon the queen? and if the son wanted an excuse for not punishing their crimes, is the mother unblameable, who not only permits the disorder of their lives, but forbids Telemachus to redress it? Is it to be supposed that this chaste matron was more indulgent to female frailty than Telemachus? The true reason is, Telemachus could not, and Penelope durst not, shew a just resentment against these criminals: they had too great an interest in the chief of the suitors to stand in awe of the queen, or fear her vengeance. This is evident: for Penelope herself was in a great measure in their power; and the same authority that supported the suitors in their insolence against the queen, would support these females against her revenge for their immodesty.

V. 469. *Not so (Ulysses more sedate replied)]* Ulysses gives this injunction, because he is unwilling to wound the eyes of Penelope with a spectacle of such horror as the dead bodies and blood of the suitors. It was indeed necessary to find some reasonable pretext for not introducing the queen immediately: this might be expected from the fondness and affection of an husband towards a beloved wife; and therefore Ulysses makes even his fondness for her a reason why he delays his discovery, namely, his care not to grieve her with such a terrible scene of slaughter: besides, the death of the female servants is to succeed, and it would have been indecent to have made her assisting or present at their execution. The poet reaps a further advantage from this conduct; for by it he introduces the discovery to Penelope in a time of leisure, and finds an opportunity to describe at large that surprising and tender incident.

V. 477. *the melancholy labour done)*

Drive to yon court]

It would in these ages, observes Dacier, be thought barbarous in a king to command his son to perform an execution of so much horror; but anciently it was thought no dishonour. Thus in the

Scriptures, Gideon having taken Zeba and Salmana, two Midian kings, commands his son to kill them with the sword in his presence;* but, continues that author, I wish Homer had deviated from this custom, that he had given both Ulysses and Telemachus sentiments of more humanity, and spared his reader a description of such a terrible execution. I am not delighted with any thing that has a tendency to inhumanity more than that lady; but it may be answered, that Homer was obliged to write according to the custom of the age. Virgil has ascribed an act more cruel to the pious Æneas, who sacrifices several unfortunate young men who were his captives. *Æn. xi. v. 15.*

‘ Then, pinion’d with their hands behind, appear
Th’ unhappy captives marching in the rear;
Appointed off’rings in the victor’s name,
To sprinkle with their blood the fun’ral flame.’

DRYDEN.

This act is to be ascribed to the manners of the age, and the customs of war in the days of Æneas, and not to his inhumanity.

V. 527. *Bring sulphur straight and fire*] The reason why Ulysses orders sulphur to be brought, is, because every thing was thought to be polluted by a dead body: and he uses it by way of purification. The same opinion prevailed amongst the Hebrews as well as Greeks, as the Scriptures inform us. Thus also in Job it is said, ‘Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation,’ *xviii. 15*; which is thought to allude to this custom. Pliny mentions this practice among the Romans, *lib. xxxv. c. 15.* ‘*Habet et in religionibus locum ad expiandas suffitu domus.*’

Homer describes the female servants descending with torches: this is done to shew the exact time of the action of this book, which is comprehended in the evening of the fortieth day.

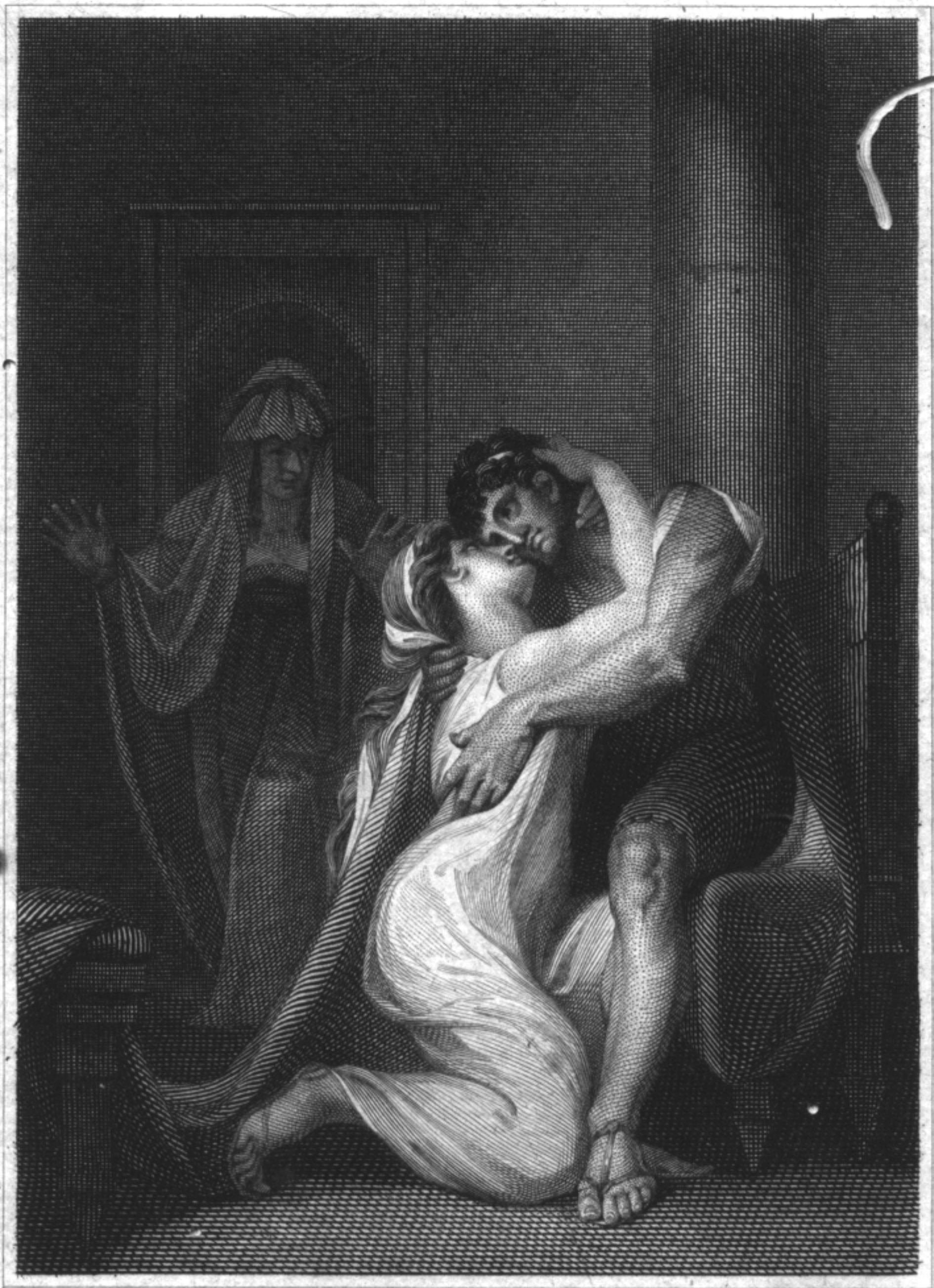
Ulysses forbids Euryclea to bring a better garment: this little particularity is inserted with judgment; for the disguise of Ulysses in the garb of a beggar contributes to increase the incredulity of Penelope, and consequently to all those doubts and fears, and that struggle between the love of a husband and the dread of an impostor, which are the subject of the succeeding book.

* *Jud. viii. 20.*

THE
TWENTY-THIRD BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

EURYCLEA awakens Penelope with the news of Ulysses's return, and the death of the suitors. Penelope scarcely credits her, but supposes some god has punished them, and descends from her apartment in doubt. At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfied. Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstances she is convinced, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness. They recount to each other all that has past during their long separation. The next morning Ulysses, arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.



Painted by H. Fuseli R.A.

Engraved by Isaac Taylor.

BOOK XXIII.

THEN to the queen, as in repose she lay,
The nurse with eager rapture speeds her way;
The transports of her faithful heart supply
A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.

And sleeps my child? the rev'rend matron cries:
Ulysses lives! arise, my child, arise! 6

At length appears the long-expected hour!

Ulysses comes! the suitors are no more!

No more they view the golden light of day;

Arise, and bless thee with the glad survey! 10

Touch'd at her words, the mournful queen re-
join'd :

Ah! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind?

The righteous pow'rs who tread the starry skies,

The weak enlighten, and confound the wise,

And human thought with unresisted sway, 15

Depress or raise, enlarge or take away:

Truth, by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,

And folly, with the tongue of wisdom speaks.

Unkind, the fond illusion to impose!

Was it to flatter, or deride, my woes? 20

Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy,
 Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy:
 Why must I wake to grieve; and curse thy shore
 O Troy?—may never tongue pronounce thee more
 Be gone: another might have felt our rage: 25
 But age is sacred; and we spare thy age.

To whom with warmth: My soul a lie disdains:
 Ulysses lives; thy own Ulysses reigns:
 That stranger, patient of the suitors' wrongs,
 And the rude licence of ungovern'd tongues, 30
 He, he is thine! thy son, his latent guest
 Long knew, but lock'd the secret in his breast;
 With well-concerted art to end his woes,
 And burst at once in vengeance on the foes.

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport
 sprung 35
 Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung;
 Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear—
 Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here?
 How could that num'rous and outrageous band
 By one be slain, though by an hero's hand? 40

I saw it not, she cries; but heard alone,
 When death was busy, a loud dying groan:
 The damsel-train turn'd pale at ev'ry wound;
 Immur'd we sat, and catch'd each passing sound.

When death had seiz'd her prey, thy son attends,
 And at his nod the damsel-train descends; 46
 There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,
 And the dead suitors almost swam in blood.
 Thy heart had leapt the hero to survey,
 Stern as the surly lion o'er his prey, 50
 Glorious in gore!—now with sulphureous fires
 The dome he purges, now the flame aspires;
 Heap'd lie the dead without the palace-walls:—
 Haste, daughter, haste, thy own Ulysses calls!
 Thy ev'ry wish the bounteous gods bestow; 55
 Enjoy the present good, and former woe:
 Ulysses lives his vanquish'd foes to see:
 He lives, to thy Telemachus and thee!

Ah no! with sighs Penelope rejoin'd,
 Excess of joy disturbs thy wand'ring mind. 60
 How blest this happy hour, should he appear!
 Dear to us all,—to me supremely dear!
 Ah no! some god the suitors' deaths decreed:
 Some god descends, and by his hand they bleed.
 Blind! to condemn the stranger's righteous cause,
 And violate all hospitable laws! 66
 The good they hated, and the pow'rs defy'd:
 But heav'n is just; and by a god they died.

For never must Ulysses view this shore;
 Never!—the lov'd Ulysses is no more! 70

What words (the matron cries) have reach'd
 my ears?

Doubt we his presence, when he now appears?
 Then hear conviction:—Ere the fatal day
 That forc'd Ulysses o'er the wat'ry way,
 A boar fierce-rushing in the silvan war 75
 Plough'd half his thigh: I saw, I saw the scar,
 And wild with transport had reveal'd the wound;
 But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
 Then, daughter, haste away! and if a lie 79
 Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die!

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies:
 Wise is thy soul; but errors seize the wise.
 The works of gods what mortal can survey?
 Who knows their motives, who shall trace their
 way?

But learn we instant how the suitors trod 85
 The paths of death; by man, or by a god?

Thus speaks the queen; and no reply attends,
 But with alternate joy and fear descends;
 At ev'ry step debates, her lord to prove!
 Or rushing to his arms, confess her love! 90

Then gliding through the marble valves in state,
Oppos'd, before the shining fire she sat.

The monarch, by a column high enthron'd,
His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground;
Curious to hear his queen the silence break: 95
Amaz'd she sat, and impotent to speak:
O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts
again.

At length Telemachus:—Oh who can find
A woman like Penelope unkind? 100

Why thus in silence? why with winning charms
Thus slow, to fly with rapture to his arms?
Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
When twice ten years are past of mighty woes:
To softness lost, to spousal love unknown, 105
The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone!

O my Telemachus! the queen rejoin'd,
Distracting fears confound my lab'ring mind;
Pow'rless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
Nor dare to question: doubts on doubts arise. 110
O deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove!

Pleas'd with her virtuous fears, the king replies:
Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wise;

Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring:
 This garb of poverty belies the king; 116

No more.—This day our deepest care requires,
 Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.
 If one man's blood, tho' mean, distain our hands,
 The homicide retreats to foreign lands: 120
 By us, in heaps th' illustrious peerage falls;
 Th' important deed our whole attention calls.

Be that thy care, Telemachus replies:
 The world conspires to speak Ulysses wise;
 For wisdom all is thine!—lo, I obey, 125
 And dauntless follow where you lead the way;
 Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
 Thy coward son degen'rate lag behind.

Then instant to the bath (the monarch cries);
 Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise, 130
 Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
 And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay;
 While the sweet lyrist airs of rapture sings,
 And forms the dance responsive to the strings:
 That hence th' eluded passengers may say, 135
 Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
 The suitors' death unknown, till we remove
 Far from the court and act inspir'd by Jove.

Thus spoke the king: th' observant train obey:
 At once they bathe, and dress in proud array: 140
 The lyrist strikes the string; gay youths advance,
 And fair-zon'd damsels form the sprightly dance.
 The voice, attun'd to instrumental sounds,
 Ascends the roof; the vaulted roof rebounds;
 Not unobserv'd: the Greeks eluded say 145
 Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
 Inconstant! to admit the bridal hour.

Thus they—but nobly chaste she weds no more.
 Meanwhile the wearied king the bath ascends;
 With faithful cares Eurynomè attends, 150
 O'er ev'ry limb a show' of fragrance sheds:
 Then drest in pomp, magnificent he treads.
 The warrior-goddess gives his frame to shine
 With majesty enlarg'd, and grace divine.
 Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly 155
 His thick large locks, of hyacinthine dye.
 As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
 His heav'nly skill, a breathing image lives;
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mould,
 And the pale silver glows with fusil gold: 160
 So Pallas his heroic form improves
 With bloom divine, and like a god he moves;

More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
Radiant before his gazing consort sat.

And oh my queen! he cries; what pow'r above
Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love! 166

Canst thou, Penelope, when heav'n restores
Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,

Canst thou, oh cruel! unconcern'd survey
Thy lost Ulysses, on this signal day? 170

Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed:

My weary nature craves the balm of rest:

But heav'n with adamant has arm'd her breast.

Ah no! she cries, a tender heart I bear; 175

A foe to pride; no adamant is there:

And now, e'en now it melts! for sure I see

Once more Ulysses my belov'd in thee!

Fix'd in my soul as when he sail'd to Troy,

His image dwells: then haste the bed of joy! 180

Haste, from the bridal bow'r the bed translate,

— Fram'd by his hand, and be it drest in state!

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious, with dis-
guise;

Touch'd at her words, the king with warmth replies:

Alas for this! what mortal strength can move 185

Th' unmov'd heart, when she thus speaks?

It mocks the weak attempts of human hands;
 But the whole earth must move, if heav'n com-
 mands.

Then hear sure evidence, while we display
 Words seal'd with sacred truth; and truth obey:
 This hand the wonder fram'd: an olive spread
 Full in the court its ever-verdant head;
 Vast as some mighty column's bulk, on high
 The huge trunk rose, and heav'd into the sky;
 Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial-bow'r, 195
 And roof'd defensive of the storm and show'r;
 The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins;
 And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.
 I lopp'd the branchy head; aloft in twain
 Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain:
 Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise; 201
 And bore it, regular, from space to space:
 Athwart the frame, at equal distance lie
 Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye;
 Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mould 205
 With silver shone, with elephant, and gold.
 But if o'erturn'd by rude ungovern'd hands,
 Or still inviolate the olive stands,
 'Tis thine, O queen, to say:—and now impart,
 If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart? 210

While yet he speaks, her pow'rs of life decay,
 She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away:
 At length recov'ring, to his arms she flew,
 And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew:
 The tears pour'd down amain:—and oh, she cries,
 Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise! 216
 O vers'd in ev'ry turn of human art,
 Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart!
 The righteous pow'rs that mortal lots dispose,
 Decree us to sustain a length of woes, 220
 And from the flow'r of life, the bliss deny
 To bloom together, fade away, and die.
 O let me, let me not thine anger move,
 That I forbore, thus, thus, to speak my love;
 Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms,
 Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms! 226
 I dreaded fraud! Men, faithless men, betray
 Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey:
 Against the fondness of my heart I strove;
 'Twas caution, oh my lord! not want of love: 230
 Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms
 Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms,
 Ere Greece rose dreadful in th' avenging day,
 Thus had she fear'd, she had not gone astray.

But heav'n, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed
That she should wander, and that Greece should
bleed: 236

Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
She colour'd all our wretched lives with woe.
But why these sorrows when my lord arrives?
I yield, I yield! my own Ulysses lives! 240
The secrets of the bridal bed are known
To thee, to me, to Actoris alone
(My father's present in the spousal hour,
The sole attendant on our genial bow'r).
Since what no eye has seen thy tongue reveal'd,
Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield,

Touch'd to the soul the king with rapture hears,
Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.
As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores
Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars; 250
Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
And gulf'd in crowds at once the sailors die;
If one more happy, while the tempest raves,
Out-lives the tumult of conflicting waves, 254
All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand,
And plunging forth with transport grasps the land:
The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,
Clasps her lov'd lord, and to his bosom grows.

Nor had they ended till the morning ray:
 But Pallas backward held the rising day, 260
 The wheels of night retarding, to detain
 The gay Aurora in the wavy main:
 Whose flaming steeds, emerging thro' the night,
 Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies: 265
 Yet fate, yet cruel fate, repose denies.
 A labour long, and hard, remains behind;
 By heav'n above, by hell beneath enjoin'd:
 For, to Tiresias through th' eternal gates
 Of hell I trod, to learn my future fates. 270
 But end we here—the night demands repose;
 Be deck'd the couch! and peace awhile, my woes!

To whom the queen: Thy word we shall obey,
 And deck the couch; far hence be woes away, 274
 Since the just gods, who tread the starry plains,
 Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.

But what those perils heav'n decrees, impart;
 Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.

To this the king: Ah why must I disclose
 A dreadful story of approaching woes? 280
 Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,
 When thou must learn, what I must speak, with

Heav'n, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse de-
crees,

Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas;
From realm to realm a nation to explore 285

Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,

A painted wonder, flying on the main:

An oar my hand must bear; a shepherd eyes

The unknown instrument with strange surprise,

And calls a corn-van: this upon the plain 291

I fix, and hail the monarch of the main;

Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore

Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar:

Thence swift re-sailing to my native shores, 295

Due victims slay to all th' ethereal pow'rs.

Then heav'n decrees in peace to end my days,

And steal myself from life by slow decays;

Unknown to pain in age resign my breath,

When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death;

To the dark grave retiring as to rest; 301

My people blessing, by my people blest.

Such future scenes th' all-righteous pow'rs dis-
play,

By their dread seer, and such my future day.

To whom thus firm of soul :—If ripe for death,
 And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath, 306
 While heav'n a kind release from ills foreshows;
 Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes!

But Euryclea with dispatchful care,
 And sage Eurynomè, the couch prepare: 310
 Instant they bid the blazing torch display
 Around the dome an artificial day;
 Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
 And to the queen Eurynomè descends;
 A torch she bears to light with guiding fires 315
 The royal pair; she guides them, and retires.
 Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led
 To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.

And now the blooming youths and sprightly
 fair

Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair: 320
 But in discourse the king and consort lay,
 While the soft hours stole unperceiv'd away.

—Intent he hears Penelope disclose
 A mournful story of domestic woes:
 His servants' insults; his invaded bed; 325
 How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled;
 His gen'rous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
 And the wild riots of the suitor-train.

The king alternate a dire tale relates,
 Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates: 330
 All he unfolds: his list'ning spouse turns pale
 With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale;
 Sleepless devours each word: and hears, how slain
 Cicons on Cicons swell th' ensanguin'd plain;
 How to the land of Lote unblest he sails; 335
 (And images the rills, and flow'ry vales!)
 How dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclops tore,
 (Not unreveng'd) and quaff'd the spouting gore;
 How, the loud storms in prison bound, he sails
 From friendly Æolus with prosp'rous gales; 340
 Yet fate withstands! a sudden tempest roars
 And whirls him groaning from his native shores:
 How on the barb'rous Læstrigonian coast,
 By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost;
 How scarce himself surviv'd: he paints the bow'r,
 The spells of Circe, and her magic pow'r; 346
 His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
 To seek Tiresias in the vales of death; —
 How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
 His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade; 350
 And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts!
 Then how unarm'd he past the Siren-coasts,

The justling rocks where fierce Charybdis raves,
 And howling Scylla whirls her thund'rous waves,
 The cave of death! How his companions slay 355
 The oxen sacred to the god of day,
 Till Jove in wrath the rattling tempest guides,
 And whelms th' offenders in the roaring tides:
 How struggling through the surge, he reach'd the
 shores

Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bow'rs, 360
 Where the gay-blooming nymph contrain'd his
 stay,

With sweet, reluctant, amorous, delay;
 And promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life exempt from age and woe:
 How sav'd from storms Phæacia's coast he trod,
 By great Alcinous honour'd as a god, 366
 Who gave him last his country to behold,
 With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.

He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
 A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares. 370

Soon as soft slumber eas'd the toils of day,
 Minerva rushes through th' aërial way,
 And bids Aurora with her golden wheels
 Flame from the ocean o'er the eastern hills:

Uprose Ulysses from the genial bed, 375

And thus with thought mature the monarch said:

My queen, my consort! thro' a length of years,

We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears:

Thou, for thy lord; while me th' immortal pow'rs

Detain'd reluctant from my native shores. 380

Now, blest again by heav'n, the queen display,

And rule our palace with an equal sway;

Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,

To throng my empty folds, with gifts or spoils.

But now I haste to bless Laertes' eyes 385

With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies;

The good old man to wasting woes a prey,

Weeps a sad life in solitude away.

But hear, though wise! This morning shall unfold

The deathful scene, on heroes, heroes roll'd; 390

Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,

From all the scene of tumult far away!

He spoke, and, sheath'd in arms, incessant flies,

To wake his son; and bid his friends arise.

To arms! aloud he cries: his friends obey, 395

With glitt'ring arms their manly limbs array,

And pass the city-gate; Ulysses leads the way.

Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds

The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.

SELECT NOTES

TO

BOOK XXIII.

THIS book contains the discovery of Ulysses to Penelope. Monsieur Rapin is very severe upon some parts of it; whose objections I shall here recite.

The discovery of Ulysses to his queen was the most favourable occasion imaginable for the poet to give us some of the nicest touches of his art: but as he has managed it, it has nothing but faint and weak surprises, cold and languishing astonishments; and very little of that delicacy and exquisiteness which ought to express a conjugal tenderness. He leaves his wife too long in doubt and distrust; and she is too cautious and circumspect. The formalities she observes in being fully assured, and her care to act with security, are set down in number and measure, lest she should fall into any mistake; and this particularity makes the story dull, in a place that so much requires briskness and liveliness. Ought not the secret instinct of her love to have inspired her with other sentiments? and should not her heart have told her, what her eyes could not? Love is penetrating, and whispers more to us than the senses can convey. But Homer understood not this philosophy. Virgil, who makes Dido foresee that Æneas designs to leave her, would have made better advantage of this favourable opportunity.

The strength of this objection consists chiefly in the long incredulity of Penelope, and the slowness she uses to make an undeniable discovery. This Rapin judges to be contrary to the passion of love: and consequently that the poet writes unnaturally.

There is somewhat of the Frenchman in this criticism: Homer, in his opinion, wants vivacity; and if Rapin had been to have drawn Ulysses, we had seen him all transport and ecstasy. But where there is most fancy, there is often the least judg-

twenty years ; and, through absence and his present disguise, he was another person from that Ulysses whom she knew, when he sailed to Troy ; so that he was become an absolute stranger. From this observation we may appeal to the reader's judgment, if Penelope, without full conviction, ought to be persuaded that this person was the real Ulysses ? And how could she be convinced, but by asking many questions, and descending to particularities, which must necessarily occasion delay in the discovery ? If indeed Ulysses and Penelope had met after a shorter absence, when one view would have assured her that he was her real husband, then too much transport could not have been expressed by the poet. But this is not the case. She is first to know her husband, before she could or ought to express her fondness for his return : otherwise she might be in danger of misplacing it upon an impostor. But she is no sooner convinced that Ulysses is actually returned, but she receives him with as much fondness as can be expressed, or as Rapin could require.

‘ While yet he speaks, her pow’rs of life decay,
 She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away :
 At length recov’ring, to his arms she flew,
 And strain’d him close, as to his breast she grew.’

Till this moment the discovery was not evidently made, and her passion would have been unseasonable ; but this is no sooner done, but she falls into an agony of affection. If she had here appeared cool and indifferent, there had been weight in Rapin's objections. Besides, Aristotle informs us, there was a play, called ‘ The False Ulysses.’ It was formed upon a story of a person who designed to surprise Penelope, and told her, that he was her husband ; and to confirm it, pretended to remember a bow, which he used before he went to the siege of Troy. This shews that Penelope had been in danger from impostors : it is therefore very prudent in her to be upon the guard, and not to yield without full conviction.

V. 6. *Ulysses lives ! Ulysses comes !*] In the Greek it is literally, Ulysses is come, he is at length come to his palace. This last circumstance is not a tautology ; for, observes Eusta-

thus, a person may be returned to his country, and yet never arrive at his family. Thus Agamemnon reached his dominions in safety; but was assassinated before he came to his palace. We may observe in general, that Euryclea and Penelope, through their whole conference, speak with brevity. Homer was too good a judge of human nature, to represent them speaking with prolixity. Passion is always in haste, and delivers itself with precipitation; and this is very well painted in this interview: Euryclea is in a transport of joy for the return of Ulysses; and Penelope has all her affections awakened at the news of it.

V. 21. *Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy, &c.*] Homer, observes Eustathius, very judiciously mentions this profound sleep of Penelope: for it might have been thought improbable, that she should not wake at the noise and confusion of the battle. It was solely to reconcile it to credibility, that in a preceding book Pallas was introduced to throw her into it. Beside, the women's apartment was always in the upper part of the house, and was from thence called *ὑπερῶν*: and consequently Penelope was at a sufficient distance from the place of the combat, and may be easily supposed not to be waked by it.

V. 35. *the queen in transport sprung*
Swift from the couch]

We are not to gather from this transport of Penelope, that she is fully convinced of the return of Ulysses. She is yet incredulous; but she must have been insensible if she had continued unmoved at the mention of the arrival of an husband, whose return has been described through the whole Odyssey as the chief object of all her desires. Beside, she receives the death of the suitors with joy. She cannot disbelieve the testimony of Euryclea concerning their deaths; but thinking it impossible that they should be slain by any one person, she ascribes their destruction not to Ulysses, but a deity. But then is not such a supposition extravagant? and can it be reconciled to probability, that a god should really be supposed to descend to work their destruction? It may be answered, that the excess of the assertion ought to be ascribed to the excess of joy in the speaker: Penelope is in a transport;

and no wonder if she speaks with amplification. She judges it impossible that such a great event should be wrought by a mortal hand; and it is therefore very natural, while she is under a surprise, and her thoughts raised above the bounds of calm reason, to ascribe it to a deity.

V. 83. *The works of gods what mortal can survey?*] This assertion is made with great judgment. Euryclea had given almost a demonstrative proof that she was not mistaken in the person of Ulysses: she had instanced in the scar which he received by a boar on mount Parnassus; and this seemed to be an undeniable evidence of her veracity. What method then could the poet take to carry on Penelope's incredulity, and give her room to resist such evidence with any appearance of reason? This is very well explained by Eustathius. Penelope (observes that author) answers with profound wisdom; her words are short, but contain excellent truth and morality. This is her meaning: 'Euryclea, you appeal to your senses for the truth of your affirmation. You saw the wound, and touched it as you bathed him; and he forbade you to make a discovery of his person. Hence you conclude, that it is Ulysses who has slain the suitors; not remembering that the gods are able thus to shew themselves to man, and assume at their pleasure such disguises. How then do you know but this is a god? Are you able to know the ways of a deity?' To this Euryclea makes no reply: whence we may gather, that it was believed to be an undeniable truth, that the divine beings sometimes assumed the shape of man, and appeared visibly upon earth.

V. 93. *The monarch, by a column high enthron'd.*] The circumstance of persons of figure being placed by a column occurs frequently in the Odyssey; it may therefore be necessary to explain it. It is mentioned twice in the eighth book, *πρὸς κίονα μακρὸν ἕρσιον*. But being there applied to Demodocus who was blind, it may be thought to mean only that he leaned against the pillar by reason of his blindness. But this is not the full import of the words: they denote dignity; and a seat erected near the column was a seat of distinction. Thus 2 Kings xi. 14. 'Behold the king stood by a pillar.' *ἐπὶ τῇ στήλῃ* 'as the manner was, and

the princes, &c. by the king.' Thus we see the royal station was by some remarkable pillar: Josephus expresses it by *ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς*, which probably is a corruption; it ought to be *ἐπὶ τῆς στήλης*, 'juxta columnam:' thus again, 2 Kings xxiii. 3, 'And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant,' &c. So that by this expression of Ulysses being seated by a column, we are to understand that he received Penelope as a king: he took the royal seat, to convince her that he was the real Ulysses.

V. 94. *withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground;
Curious to hear his queen the silence break.]*

We have all along been vindicating the conduct of Penelope, for not immediately acknowledging Ulysses. Her ignorance of his person is her vindication; but how then is Ulysses to be justified, who is in no doubt about Penelope? Why does he not fly with transport to the wife of his affection? The reason is very evident: he very well knows that Penelope is uncertain about his person; he therefore forbears to offer violence to her modesty by any caresses, while she is in this state of uncertainty; and which decency requires her to refuse, till she is assured that the person who offers them is Ulysses.

Homer tells us, that Ulysses turned his eyes towards the ground. Eustathius imagines, that he does it that Penelope may not immediately discover him; but perhaps the poet intended no more than to draw Ulysses here, as he drew him in the Iliad, lib. iii. and describe him according to his usual behaviour:

' In thought profound,
His modest eyes he fix'd upon the ground.'

V. 96. *Amaz'd she sat, and impotent to speak.]* The reader will certainly be curious to know how Penelope accosts Ulysses in this first interview; and the poet manages it with excellent judgment. She must be supposed to be under a great surprise and confusion of thought: this surprise takes away her speech. She is tost between hopes and fears; and consequently it is very natural, before she speaks, to examine him with her eyes.

V. 106. *The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone.]* It

has been objected that Telemachus here makes too free a remonstrance to Penelope; and that he is wanting in reverence towards his mother. Dacier answers, that Telemachus being fully assured that it is the real Ulysses, seems shocked at the indifference of Penelope. And indeed the warmth of the expression is to be imputed to the emotion of the speaker: so that we are not to look upon it as an outrage of decency towards Penelope; but a warm expostulation occasioned by his zeal for Ulysses.

V. 116. *This garb of poverty belies the king.*] This expression furnishes another cause for the incredulity of Penelope. Ulysses imputes it to his disguise; and is far from resenting it as a want of conjugal affection. I must confess, that here may seem to be an unseasonable transition. Homer brings Ulysses and Penelope together, raises our expectations to see a warm and tender description at the discovery of the husband to the wife, and all of a sudden he starts from the subject, and leaves us under an uncertainty equal to that of Penelope. The scene closes too abruptly: and ~~Homer~~ acts like one who invites his guests to an entertainment, and when they were sat down with an eager appetite, takes away their dinner. But then it may be answered, that the occasion presses: Ulysses finds it necessary to provide for his own safety, before the people of Ithaca are informed of the slaughter of the suitors. This is the dictate of good sense. He first acts the wise man, by guarding against an imminent danger; and then shews the tender husband, by his affection to Penelope: and this is the reason why he adjourns the discovery. Besides, this interval, which is very short, gives time to Penelope to recollect her spirits from surprise, and makes her mistress of her own thoughts. In that view the reader is to look upon this break, like a pause between the acts in a tragedy; and as an artful interruption to introduce the unravelling more naturally, and with greater probability.

V. 119. *If one man's blood*] Ulysses here argues very conclusively. If the person who has shed one man's blood only, and that man of inferior station,—if he is yet obliged to fly into banishment, lest he should be slain by any of the dead person's relations or friends, what have they to fear, who have not only

slain one man, but above an hundred; and these not plebeians, but princes? They must necessarily have many avengers, who will be ready to pursue our lives.

But it may be objected, that Ulysses is a king, and therefore above apprehensions of punishment. It is true Ulysses is a king; yet subject to the laws: his government was not so despotic, as to have no reason to fear the resentments of the chief families of his subjects, whose heirs were slain by his hand.—I cannot entirely agree with Dacier in this last sentiment: Ulysses had only done an act of justice upon these offenders, and had transgressed no law by it; and ought therefore to apprehend no vengeance from the law. I should rather ascribe the apprehensions of Ulysses to a fear of a sudden assault from the friends of the suitors, before he could discover himself to be the real Ulysses. He is afraid of an assassination, not a legal punishment; the rage of the people, not the justice of the law.

V. 135. *That hence th' eluded passengers may say,
Lo! the queen weds]*

This is an instance of the art of Ulysses, essential to his character, and maintained through the whole Odyssey. Eustathius excellently explains the reason of this conduct. The suitors had been accustomed to retire from the palace, and sleep in other places by night: it would therefore have alarmed the whole city, and made them apprehensive that some calamity had befallen them, if there had not appeared a seeming reason why they returned not to their several houses as usual. Ulysses therefore invents this stratagem to deceive them into an opinion that they stayed to celebrate the queen's nuptials. But there appears to be a strong objection against this part of the relation. We have already seen the suitors slain, without being heard by the Ithacans of the city; is it then probable that the sound of the music should be heard abroad, when the cries, shouts, and groans, during the fight, were not heard out of the palace? Was the music louder than these united noises? It is not easy to solve this difficulty: unless we are allowed to imagine that the more than usual stay of the suitors in the palace had raised the curiosity of some of the Ithacans to in-

quire the reason of it; who consequently approaching the palace might hear the music and dancing, and conclude that it was occasioned by the queen's marriage. Besides, in the stillness of the night, a lower sound may be further heard, than one more loud, during the noise and hurry of the day: it being evident from the preceding book, that the fight was by day.

V. 137. Till we remove

Far from the court]

It may be asked what occasions this recess of Ulysses? Will he be better able to resist his enemies in the country than in the city? The answer is, he withdraws that he may avoid the first resentments of the Ithacans, upon the discovery of the death of the suitors: besides, it is by this method in his power to conceal his person, till the violence of the people is settled; or raise a party to resist their efforts. At the worst, he is certain to secure his flight, if his affairs should be reduced to extremities.

V. 175. *Ah no! she cries, a tender heart I bear,
A foe to pride; no adamant is there.]*

It is not easy to translate this passage literally:

. ἔτ' αἰ τι μεγαλίζομαι, εὐδ' ἀθερίζω;
Οὐδε λην ἀγαμαί. (V. 174, 5.)

Eustathius explains *μεγαλίζομαι* to signify, 'I am not of a proud heart;' *ἀθερίζω*, 'I despise not your poverty;' *ἀγαμαί*, 'I am not longer under an astonishment;' or *εὐδ' ἀπλητίζομαι*, 'I cease to be surprised at what I see and hear.' Thus Penelope speaks negatively: and the meaning of her words is, that she is not influenced by pride and cruelty, to persist in her incredulity, but by a laudable care and caution. Eustathius proposes Penelope as a pattern to all women upon the like occasion. Her own eyes persuade her that the person with whom she confers is Ulysses; Euryclea acknowledges her master; Telemachus his father; yet she dares not immediately credit her own eyes, Euryclea, or Telemachus: and the same author concludes with a pretty observation, that Ulysses found it easier to subdue above an hundred enemies, than the diffidence and incredulity of Penelope.

V. 183. *Thus speaks the queen, still dubious*] It must be allowed that this is a very artful turn of thought in Penelope. Ulysses commands a bed to be prepared: Penelope catches the word; and, seeming to consent, orders Euryclea to carry the bed out of the bridal apartment, and prepare it. Now this bed was of such a nature as to be inwrought into the substance of the apartment itself, and could not be removed: if therefore Ulysses had acquiesced in the injunction given by Penelope, and not discovered the impossibility of it, she might very justly have concluded him an impostor, being manifestly ignorant of the secret of his own marriage-bed.

But Eustathius starts an objection against this whole process of the discovery, which he calls insolvable; and indeed if Homer fails in the unravelling of his poem, he is to be severely blamed. Tully is of this opinion: ‘*Illic enim debet toto animo a poetâ in dissolutionem nodi agi; eaque præcipua fabulæ pars est, quæ requirit diligentiam.*’ The difficulty raised by Eustathius is as follows: Penelope imagines that the person who pretends to be her husband is not really Ulysses, but a god, who not only assumes his form, but, to favour the imposture, the resemblance of the wound received from the boar. Now if he be a god, how is it possible that she should conceive him to be ignorant of the secret of the marriage-bed: and consequently how can she be convinced of the reality of Ulysses from his knowledge of it, when it must necessarily be known to a god, as well as to the real Ulysses?—The answer is, Penelope thought him a god only during her first transport; it is to be imputed to her surprise, that she at all thinks him a deity. This is very evident: for from the moment she saw him, the thought of his divinity vanishes, and she never mentions one word concerning such a supposition. Nay, from the first glance she almost believes him to be the real Ulysses:

‘O’er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain;

Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.’

Dacier objects, that this apartment could not possibly be erected without being known to other persons. But we have seen Ulysses build a ship in a solitary island, without the assist-

ance of any man, in the fifth *Odyssey*; and why may he not then be allowed to do the same, with respect to this nuptial-bower? All kinds of arts in mechanics were anciently practised by the greatest personages, and their knowledge and dexterity in them was esteemed a glory. This consideration may perhaps reconcile the reader to this part of the discovery.

The only difficulty that now remains is this: Actoris, a female servant, is allowed to be in the secret; how then can Penelope be assured that she has not betrayed it? Homer himself obviates this objection: he has in a very solemn manner told us, that only twelve of all the female train were guilty of a breach of trust; and therefore Penelope may safely rely upon the fidelity of Actoris. Besides, it adds no small weight to this vindication of Homer, to observe, that the whole procedure of the discovery is accidental: how could Ulysses foreknow that the proof of his veracity would depend upon his knowledge of the bridal bower? and consequently it is not to be imagined that he should have made any clandestine enquiries about it. Actoris alone was acquainted with the nature of this bed: no person was anciently permitted to enter the women's apartment, but fathers, husbands, or brothers; this therefore was the greatest secret in all families; this secret Penelope proposes in the trial of Ulysses, and upon this knowledge of it receives him as her husband. To instance almost in a parallel case: Orestes in Euripides tells Iphigenia, that the lance which Pelops used in the combat against Oenomaus was lodged in her apartment: this circumstance convinces her that the person who knew this secret must be her brother Orestes; no persons of a more distant relation being admitted into such privacies.

V. 193. *Vast as some mighty column's bulk, on high*

The huge trunk rose]

I will not promise that the reader will be pleased with this ~~de~~ description of the nuptial bower: the Greek is noble, and the words sounding and harmonious; an happiness that is wanting in our language. In this and the like cases the translator must say with Lucretius upon a like occasion,

‘ Graiorum obscura reperta
 Difficile illustrare Latinis versibus esse,
 Propter Egestatem linguæ, et rerum novitatem.’
 (L. i. 136—40.)

Besides, it must be allowed that the relation itself is very wonderful; for it is not easy to conceive that the bole of an olive tree should be so large as to contain upon the dimensions of it a whole bedstead. I would willingly imagine that it is only a supporter of it. It is likewise somewhat extraordinary that this olive tree is not felled, or cut up from the roots; for Eustathius informs us, that *περίλαμνον* signifies ‘to cut asunder at some distance from the earth;’ so that a great part of the trunk is left standing, upon which Ulysses builds his bridal bed. What occurs to me upon this incident is, that Homer must be imagined to write according to the customs of the age in which he lived, unless we can suppose he unnecessarily invented an absurdity: I therefore doubt not but there were anciently such beds as this of Ulysses. Beside, the more wonderful this bed is, the better it serves for the purpose of Homer; in convincing us that the person, who was acquainted with a matter so uncommon, must be the real Ulysses, and not an impostor: it is for this purpose that the poet describes the bower built round the olive tree, before the framing of the bed is at all mentioned:

‘ Around the tree I rais’d a nuptial bow’r,
 And roof’d, defensive of the storm and show’r:
 Then lopp’d the branchy head; aloft in twain
 Sever’d the bole, and smooth’d the shining grain.’

This, I say, is particularly described by Homer, to convince us that the place where the bed stood was entirely secret: it being closed up from observation before this particular apartment was undertaken. And therefore the knowledge of it was a strong argument that the person who was acquainted with it must be the real Ulysses.

V. 231. *Like me had Helen fear’d*] This passage occasioned great disputes amongst the ancient critics. Some contended for the common punctuation; others thus read it,

Then the meaning of the passage is thus to be understood: Helen would not have yielded to a stranger, if she had known that stranger: *εἰ ᾤδῃ, ἀνδρῶν* is to be understood according to this interpretation. The same critics thus construe the following words,

‘Ο μὲν αὐτῇ; ἀγνοῖσι υἱὲς Ἀχαιῶν. (v. 210.)

Ο is the same with *διὸ*, ‘propter hanc causam:’ and the whole passage is thus to be translated, ‘If Helen had known the stranger, she would not have yielded to him; therefore the Greeks rose in arms to free her from the impostor.’ They defend this explication by having recourse to a tradition, that Paris could never have obtained the consent of Helen if Venus had not given him the resemblance of Menelaus, in whose form he prevailed upon that fatal beauty. Otherwise the instance is no ways parallel; for if Helen was not deceived, how can her example be brought to induce Penelope to act with caution, lest she take an impostor to her bed instead of an husband? I confess this construction of the Greek appears to me very obscure; contrary to the style of Homer, which is always clear and natural. Besides, it contradicts the whole story of Helen through the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: and she herself nowhere alledges this deceit as her excuse; but frequently condemns her own conduct in forsaking the bed of Menelaus. But granting that she was thus deceived originally, the deceit must necessarily soon appear; and yet she voluntarily cohabits many years with Paris. The other interpretation may therefore perhaps be preferable; namely, if Helen had considered what evils might ensue from her injury to Menelaus, she would have acted more wisely. This Penelope introduces to vindicate her conduct in acting with so much caution; she opposes her wariness to the inconsiderateness of Helen, and ascribes all the calamities of Greece to it.

V. 260. *But Pallas backward held the rising day.*] We are not to look upon this merely as a poetical ornament: there is a necessity for it. The battle between the suitors and Ulysses happened in the evening: since then we have seen the palace purified, the dead suitors carried away, and the female servants punished; Euryclia has held a long conference with Penelope, there

has been singing and dancing in the palace, and an interview at large described between Ulysses and Penelope; then the poet proceeds to recapitulate the story of the whole Odyssey: now all these incidents could not be comprehended in the compass of one night: Homer therefore, to reconcile it to probability, introduces Minerva to protract it, and make the time proportionable to the incidents. But perhaps it may be thought a violent machine, and contrary to the established laws of nature, to suppose the course of the night alterable: the answer is, poets are allowed to write according to common fame: and what Homer here relates could not shock the ears of the ancients, who had before heard of the like story at the conception of Hercules. I will only observe, that Homer gives no more than two horses to Aurora's chariot, Lampus and Phaethon; whereas the chariot of the sun is described with four: thus Ovid,

‘ Interea volucres, Pyroeis, Eous, et Æthon,
Solis equi, quartusque Phlegon.’ (Met. ii. 153, 4.)

V. 317. *his fair spouse Ulysses led*

To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.]

Eustathius informs us, that Aristarchus, and Aristophanes the grammarian, thought the verse quoted at the head of this remark to be the conclusion of the Odyssey: and consequently they judged the remaining part of this book, and the whole xxivth, supposititious. The same objection has been made against the two last books of the Iliad, as against these of the Odyssey: the former ought to have ended with the decisive action in the death of Hector, and the latter with the discovery of Ulysses to Penelope, when his happiness seems to be established. But there is no weight in these objections. There is a difference between the ‘unravelling’ of the action, and the full ‘accomplishment’ of it: the action is unravelled by the death of the suitors; but there are consequences arising from their deaths that hinder the accomplishment of the action, namely, the danger of the resentments of their friends, who rise in arms to revenge their slaughter: and till their insurrection is pacified, Ulysses cannot be said to be in a state of security. The subject of the Iliad is the anger of Achil-

les: that of the *Odyssey*, the re-establishment of Ulysses in his dominions. Now the anger of Achilles ends not with the death of Hector: nor is Ulysses fully re-established by the death of the suitors; he has another obstacle to overcome, and till the commotions of the Ithacans are appeased, the design of the poem is not executed, which is to shew Ulysses in peaceful possession of his palace and authority. We see in this very book, that Ulysses is forced to fly from his own palace; can he then be said to be re-established in tranquillity? This very action demonstrates, that what follows is part of the subject of the poem; and such a part as, if it had not been related, would have given us room to have imagined that Homer had never finished it, or that the conclusion of it had been lost. The beginning of the action is his sailing from Troy toward his country; the middle contains all the calamities he sustains in his return, the disorders of his family before and after it; and the end of the action is his re-establishment in the peaceful possession of his kingdoms, when he is acknowledged by his wife, father, family, and subjects: now this is not completed till the very end of the last book, and consequently that book is not spurious; but essential. The poet had ended very injudiciously, if he had stopped before: for the reader would have remained unsatisfied in two necessary points, viz. how he was made known to Laertes, and what vengeance the chief families of the nation endeavoured to take against the destroyer of their sons: but this storm being once blown over, and all his subjects who had taken arms being either vanquished or appeased, the action is completed in all its parts, and consummates the *Odyssey*.

V. 355. *How his companions slay
The oxen sacred to the god of day.]*

The story of these oxen is fully related, lib. xii. I refer to the annotations. The crime of the companions of Ulysses was sacrilege; they having destroyed the herds sacred to a god. These herds were said to be immortal: I have there given the reason of it, but too concisely: and will therefore add a supplement from the *Polyhymnia* of Herodotus. I ought to have mentioned, that the body of soldiers called Immortal was a select number of men

in the army of Xerxes ; so named, because upon the death of any one of their number, whether by war or sickness, another was immediately substituted into his room, so that they never amounted to more or less than ten thousand. If we apply this piece of history to the herds of Apollo, it excellently explains Homer's poetry : they are called Immortal, because upon the death of any one of the whole herd, another was brought into its place ; they are said neither to increase nor decay, because they were always of a fixed number, and continually supplied upon any vacancy.

I have been more full upon this head, to shew that Homer's fiction is built upon a foundation of truth ; and that he writes according to the religion of the ancients.

This book ends in the morning of the forty-first day. There are but few verses in the translation, more than in Homer. I speak it not as if this were a beauty ; it may as well be a fault. Our heroic verse consists but of ten syllables ; the Greek oftentimes of seventeen, as in this verse,

ΑΥΤΙΣ ΕΠΕΙΤΑ ΠΕΘΟΙΔΕ ΚΥΛΙΝΔΕΙΟ ΛΑΑΣ ΑΝΑΙΔΗΣ.

We therefore write with the disadvantage of seven syllables ; which makes it generally impossible to comprehend the sense of one line in Homer within the compass of one line in a translation, with any tolerable beauty : but in some parts, where the subject seemed to hang heavy, this has been attempted ; with what success, must be left to the reader.

THE
TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades. Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him busied in his garden all alone: the manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described. They return together to his lodge; and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants. The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses; who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes: and the goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects; which concludes the Odyssey.



Drawn by R.^d Westall R.A.

Engraved by Ja.^s Fittler A.

BOOK XXIV.

CYLLENIUS now to Pluto's dreary reign
Conveys the dead, a lamentable train!
The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,
That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day, 5
Points out the long uncomfortable way. .
Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
Thin hollow screams, along the deep descent.
As in the cavern of some rifted den,
Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene, 10
Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock,
They move, and murmurs run thro' all the rock:
So cow'ring fled the sable heaps of ghosts;
And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts. 14
And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends;
And now the gates where ev'ning Sol descends,
And Leucas' rock, and ocean's utmost streams;
And now pervade the dusky land of dreams,
And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell
In ever-flow'ring meads of asphodel.

The empty forms of men inhabit there;
 Impassive semblance, images of air!
 Nought else are all that shin'd on earth before;
 Ajax, and great Achilles, are no more!
 Yet still a master-ghost the rest he aw'd, 25
 The rest ador'd him, tow'ring as he trod:
 Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd;
 And lov'd Patroclus still attends his shade.

New as they were to that infernal shore,
 The suitors stopt, and gaz'd the hero o'er: 30
 When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
 Of great Atrides: him in pomp pursu'd
 And solemn sadness, through the gloom of hell,
 The train of those who by Egisthus fell.

O mighty chief! (Pelides thus began) 35
 Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man!
 King of a hundred kings! to whom resign'd
 The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind;
 Com'st thou the first, to view this dreary state?
 And was the noblest the first mark of fate? 40
 Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon;
 The lot, which all lament, and none can shun!
 Oh! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,
 With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round!

Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might
 raise 45

Historic marbles to record thy praise:

Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone

Had with transmissive glories grac'd thy son.

But heavier fates were destin'd to attend!

What man is happy, till he knows his end? 50

O son of Peleus! greater than mankind!

(Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoin'd)

Thrice happy thou! to press the martial plain

Midst heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain:

In clouds of smoke, rais'd by the noble fray, 55

Great and terrific e'en in death you lay,

And deluges of blood flow'd round you ev'ry way.

Nor ceas'd the strife, till Jove himself oppos'd,

And all in tempests the dire ev'ning clos'd.

Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load, 60

And decent on the fun'ral bed bestow'd.

Then unguents sweet and tepid streams we shed;

Tears flow'd from ev'ry eye, and o'er the dead

Each clipt the curling honours of his head.

Struck at the news, thy azure mother came; 65

The sea-green sisters waited on the dame:

A voice of loud lament through all the main

Was heard, and terror seiz'd the Grecian train:

Back to their ships the frightened host had fled,
 But Nestor spoke;—they listen'd, and obey'd. 70
 (From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
 And long vicissitudes of human things.)

'Forbear your flight: fair Thetis from the main
 To mourn Achilles leads her azure train.'

Around thee stand the daughters of the deep, 75
 Robe thee in heav'nly vests, and round thee weep;
 Round thee, the muses, with alternate strain,
 In ever-consecrating verse complain.

Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,
 And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears. 80

Till sev'nteën nights and sev'nteën days return'd,
 All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.

To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day;
 And fatted sheep, and sable oxen, slay;
 With oils and honey blaze th' augmented fires, 85
 And like a god adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.

Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pile
 Urge the fleet courser's or the racer's toil;
 Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
 And the mixt clamour thunders in the skies. 90

Soon as absorpt in all-embracing flame
 Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name,

We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
 With wines and unguents in a golden vase;
 (The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old, 95
 And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptur'd gold)
 There we thy relics, great Achilles, blend
 With dear Patroclus, the departed friend:
 In the same urn a sep'rate space contains
 Thy next belov'd, Antilochus' remains. 100
 Now all the sons of warlike Greece surround
 Thy destin'd tomb, and cast a mighty mound:
 High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
 That wide th' extended Hellespont surveys;
 Where all, from age to age who pass the coast,
 May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty
 ghost. 106
 Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims
 Heroic prizes and exequial games;
 The gods assented; and around thee lay
 Rich spoils and gifts that blaz'd against the day.
 Oft have I seen with solemn fun'ral games 111
 Heroes and kings committed to the flames;
 But strength of youth, or valour of the brave,
 With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.
 Such were the games by azure Thetis giv'n; 115
 And such thy honours, O belov'd of heav'n!

Dear to mankind thy fame survives ; nor fades
 Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.
 But what to me avail my honours gone,
 Successful toils, and battles bravely won? 120
 Doom'd by stern Jove, at home to end my life,
 By curst Ægisthus, and a faithless wife!

Thus they :— while Hermes o'er the dreary plain
 Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.
 On each majestic form they cast a view ; 125
 And tim'rous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.
 But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,
 His ancient host Amphimedon survey'd :
 Son of Melanthius! (he began) O say!
 What cause compell'd so many, and so gay, 130
 To tread the downward melancholy way?
 Say, could one city yield a troop so fair?
 Were all these partners of one native air?
 Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep
 Your lives at once, and whelm beneath the deep?
 Did nightly thieves, or pirates' cruel bands, 136
 Drench with your blood your pillag'd country's
 sands?

Or well-defending some beleaguer'd wall,
 Say, for the public did ye greatly fall?

Inform thy guest, for such I was of yore 140
 When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore;
 Forc'd a long month the wintry seas to bear,
 To move the great Ulysses to the war.

O king of men! I faithful shall relate
 (Reply'd Amphimedon) our hapless fate. 145

Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
 With rival loves pursu'd his royal dame:
 Her coy reserve, and prudence mix'd with pride,
 Our common suit nor granted, nor denied;
 But close with inward hate our deaths design'd;
 Vers'd in all arts of wily womankind.

Her hand, laborious, in delusion, spread
 A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread;
 Ye peers (she cried), who press to gain my heart,
 Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part, 155

Yet a short space, your rival-suit suspend,
 Till this funereal web my labours end:
 Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death:

Lest, when the fates his royal ashes claim, 160
 The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;
 Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
 Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.

The fiction pleas'd : our gen'rous train complies ;
 Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise. 165
 The work she plied ; but studious of delay,
 Each following night revers'd the toils of day.
 Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ;
 The fourth, her maid reveal'd th' amazing tale,
 And show'd, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
 The backward labours of her faithless hand. 171
 Forc'd, she completes it ; and before us lay
 The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray
 Display'd the radiance of the night and day.

Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil, 175
 Ill fortune led Ulysses to our isle.
 Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,
 At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay :
 Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,
 And speedy lands, and secretly confers. 180
 They plan our future ruin, and resort
 Confed'rate to the city and the court.
 First came the son ; the father next succeeds
 Clad like a beggar, whom Eumæus leads ;
 Propt on a staff, deform'd with age and care, 185
 And hung with rags that flutter'd in the air.
 Who could Ulysses in that form behold ?
 Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,

Ill us'd by all!—to ev'ry wrong resign'd,
 Patient he suffer'd with a constant mind. 190
 But when, arising in his wrath t' obey
 The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way;
 The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
 Careful he treasur'd in a private room:
 Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose 195
 The archer's strife; the source of future woes,
 And omen of our death!—In vain we drew
 The twanging string, and tried the stubborn yew:
 To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands;
 In vain we threat; Telemachus commands: 200
 The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent;
 Through ev'ry ring the victor arrow went.
 Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood,
 Pour'd forth the darts, that thirsted for our blood,
 And frown'd before us, dreadful as a god! 205
 First bleeds Antinous: thick the shafts resound;
 And heaps on heaps the wretches strow the ground;
 This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall;
 Some god assisted, and unmann'd us all:
 Ignoble cries precede the dying groans; 210
 And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones.

Thus, great Atrides! thus Ulysses drove
 The shades thou seest, from yon fair realms above.

Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
 Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor. 215
 No friend to bathe our wounds! or tears to shed
 O'er the pale corpse,—the honours of the dead.

Oh blest Ulysses (thus the king exprest
 His sudden rapture), in thy consort blest!
 Not more thy wisdom, than her virtue, shin'd;
 Not more thy patience, than her constant mind:
 Icarius' daughter, glory of the past,
 And model to the future age, shall last:
 The gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
 (Their great reward) a poet in her praise. 225
 Not such, O Tyndarus! thy daughter's deed,
 By whose dire hand her king and husband bled:
 Her shall the muse to infamy prolong,
 Example dread! and theme of tragic song!
 The gen'ral sex shall suffer in her shame; 230
 And e'en the best that bears a woman's name.

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
 Conferr'd the mournful phantoms of the dead:
 While from the town, Ulysses, and his band,
 Past to Laertes' cultivated land. 235
 The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain;
 And labour made the rugged soil a plain.

There stood his mansion of the rural sort,
 With useful buildings round the lowly court:
 Where the few servants that divide his care, 240
 Took their laborious rest, and homely fare;
 And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
 With constant duty tends his drooping age.

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
 And martial son, Ulysses gave command : 245
 Enter the house, and of the bristly swine
 Select the largest to the pow'rs divine.
 Alone, and unattended, let me try
 If yet I share the old man's memory:
 If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know, 250
 (Their light and dearest object long ago)
 Now chang'd with time, with absence, and with
 woe?

Then to his train he gives his spear and shield;
 The house they enter; and he seeks the field,
 Thro' rows of shade with various fruitage crown'd,
 And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round. 256
 Nor aged Dolius, nor his sons were there:
 Nor servants, absent on another care;
 To search the woods for sets of flow'ry thorn,
 Their orchard-bounds to strengthen and adorn.

But all alone the hoary king he found:
 His habit coarse, but warmly wrapt around;
 His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,
 Fenc'd with a double cap of goatskin hair:
 His buskins old, in former service torn, 265
 But well repair'd; and gloves against the thorn.
 In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,
 And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.
 Beneath a neighb'ring tree, the chief divine
 Gaz'd o'er his sire, retracing ev'ry line, 270
 The ruins of himself! now worn away
 With age, yet still majestic in decay!
 Sudden his eyes releas'd their wat'ry store;
 The much-enduring man could bear no more.
 Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace 275
 His aged limbs, to kiss his rev'rend face,
 With eager transport to disclose the whole,
 And pour at once the torrent of his soul.—
 Not so:—his judgment takes the winding way
 Of question distant, and of soft essay; 280
 More gentle methods on weak age employs,
 And moves the sorrows, to enhance the joys.
 Then, to his sire with beating heart he moves;
 And with a tender pleasantry reproves: 284

Who digging round the plant still hangs his head,
Nor aught remits the work, while thus he said:

Great is thy skill, O father! great thy toil:
Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the soil,
Thy squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare,
The olive green, blue fig, and pendent pear; 290
And not one empty spot escapes thy care.
On ev'ry plant and tree thy cares are shown;
Nothing neglected, but thyself alone.

Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame;
Age so advanc'd may some indulgence claim. 295

Not for thy sloth, I deem thy lord unkind;
Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind:
I read a monarch in that princely air,
The same thy aspect, if the same thy care;
Soft sleep, fair garments, and the joys of wine, 300
These are the rights of age, and should be thine.

Who then thy master, say? and whose the land
So dress'd and manag'd by thy skilful hand?
But chief, O tell me! (what I question most)
Is this the far-fam'd Ithacensian coast? • 305

For so reported the first man I view'd
(Some surly islander, of manners rude),
Nor farther conference vouchsaf'd to stay;

Headless he whistled, and never'd his man

But thou! whom years have taught to understand,
 Humanely hear, and answer my demand: 311

A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave;

Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave?

Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)

When at my house I lodg'd this foreign guest;

He said from Ithaca's fair isle he came,

And old Laertes was his father's name.

To him, whatever to a guest is ow'd

I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd;

To him sev'n talents of pure ore I told, 320

Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunics stiff with
 gold,

A bowl, that rich with polish'd silver flames;

And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames.

At this the father, with a father's fears

(His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears): 325

This is the land; but ah! thy gifts are lost,

For godless men, and rude, possess the coast:

Sunk is the glory of this once fam'd shore!

Thy ancient friend, O stranger, is no more!

Full recompense thy bounty else had borne; 330

For ev'ry good man yields a just return:

So civil rights demand; and who begins

The track of friendship, not pursuing, sins.

But tell me, stranger, be the truth confest,
 What years have circled since thou saw'st that
 guest? 335

That hapless guest, alas! for ever gone!
 (Wretch that he was; and that I am!) my son!
 If ever man to misery was born,
 'Twas his to suffer, and 'tis mine to mourn!
 Far from his friends, and from his native reign,
 He lies, a prey to monsters of the main; 341
 Or savage beasts his mangled relicks tear,
 Or screaming vultures scatter through the air:
 Nor could his mother fun'ral unguents shed;
 Nor wail'd his father o'er th' untimely dead; 345
 Nor his sad consort, on the mournful bier,
 Seal'd his cold eyes, or dropt a tender tear!

But tell me, who thou art? and what thy race?
 Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place?
 Or if a merchant in pursuit of gain, 350
 What port receiv'd thy vessel from the main?
 Or com'st thou single, or attend thy train?

Then thus the son:—From Alybas I came,
 My palace there; Eperitus my name.
 Not vulgar born; from Aphidas, the king 355
 Of Polypemon's royal line, I spring.

Some adverse dæmon from Sicania bore
 Our wand'ring course, and drove us on your shore:
 Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
 Reliev'd our wearied vessel from the sea. 360

Five years have circled since these eyes pursu'd
 Ulysses parting through the sable flood;
 Prosp'rous he sail'd, with dexter auguries,
 And all the wing'd good omens of the skies. 364
 Well hop'd we, then, to meet on this fair shore;
 Whom heav'n, alas! decreed to meet no more.

Quick thro' the father's heart these accents ran;
 Grief seiz'd at once, and wrapt up all the man:
 Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
 A cloud of ashes on his hoary head. 370

Trembling with agonies of strong delight
 Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the sight:
 He ran, he seiz'd him with a strict embrace,—
 With thousand kisses wander'd o'er his face,
 I, I am he;—O father, rise!—behold 375

Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old;
 Thy son,—so long desir'd, so long detain'd,—
 Restor'd, and breathing in his native land:
 These floods of sorrow, oh my sire, restrain!
 The vengeance is complete; the suitor-train, 380
 Stretch'd in our palace, by these hands lie slain.

Amaz'd, Laertes:—' Give some certain sign,
 (If such thou art) to manifest thee mine.'
 Lo here the wound (he cries) receiv'd of yore,
 The scar indented by the tusky boar, 385
 When by thyself and by Anticlea sent,
 To old Autolycus's realms I went.
 Yet by another sign thy offspring know:
 The sev'ral trees you gave me long ago, 389
 While, yet a child, these fields I lov'd to trace,
 And trod thy footsteps with unequal pace;
 To ev'ry plant in order as we came,
 Well-pleas'd you told its nature, and its name;
 Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd; 394
 Twelve pear-trees bowing with their pendent load,
 And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd;
 Full fifty purple figs; and many a row
 Of various vines that then began to blow,
 A future vintage! when the hours produce
 Their latent buds, and Sol exalts the juice. 400

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,
 His heart within him melts; his knees sustain
 Their feeble weight no more; his arms alone
 Support him, round the lov'd Ulysses thrown:
 He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress: 405
 Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.

Soon as returning life regains its seat,
 And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat;
 Yes, I believe (he cries) almighty Jove! 409
 Heav'n rules us yet, and gods there are above.
 'Tis so—the suitors for their wrongs have paid—
 But what shall guard us, if the town invade?
 If, while the news through ev'ry city flies,
 All Ithaca and Cephallenia rise?
 To this Ulysses:—As the gods shall please 415
 Be all the rest; and set thy soul at ease.
 Haste to the cottage by this orchard side;
 And take the banquet which our cares provide:
 There wait thy faithful band of rural friends;
 And there the young Telemachus attends. 420
 Thus having said, they trac'd the garden o'er,
 And stooping enter'd at the lowly door.
 The swains and young Telemachus they found,
 The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.
 The hoary king, his old Sicilian maid 425
 Perfum'd and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.
 Pallas attending gives his frame to shine
 With awful port, and majesty divine;
 His gazing son admires the godlike grace,
 And air celestial dawning o'er his face. 430

What god, he cried, my father's form improves?
How high he treads, and how enlarg'd he moves?

Oh! would to all the deathless pow'rs on high,
Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky!
(Replied the king elated with his praise) 435

My strength were still, as once in better days:
When the bold Cephalens the leaguer form'd,
And proud Neritus trembled as I storm'd.
Such were I now, not absent from your deed
When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed, 440
This arm had aided yours; this hand bestrown
Our floors with death, and push'd the slaughter on;
Nor had the sire been sep'rate from the son.

They commun'd thus:—while homeward bent
their way

The swains, fatigu'd with labours of the day; 445
Dolius the first, the venerable man;
And next his sons, a long-succeeding train:
For due refection to the bow'r they came,
Call'd by the careful old Sicilian dame, 449
Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the sire:
They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.
On chairs and beds in order seated round,
They share the gladsome board: the roofs resound

While thus Ulysses to his ancient friend :

‘ Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend ; 455

The rites have waited long.’ The chief commands

Their loves in vain ; old Dolius spreads his hands,

Springs to his master with a warm embrace,

And fastens kisses on his hands and face ; 459

Then thus broke out :—Oh long, oh daily mourn’d !

Beyond our hopes, and to our wish, return’d !

Conducted sure by heav’n ! for heav’n alone

Could work this wonder : welcome to thy own !

And joys and happiness attend thy throne ! 464

Who knows thy blest, thy wish’d return ? O say,

To the chaste queen shall we the news convey ?

Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day ?

Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride

Already is it known (the king replied,

And straight resum’d his seat) : while round him

bows 470

Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows :

Then all beneath their father take their place,

Rank’d by their ages, and the banquet grace.

Now flying fame the swift report had spread

Through all the city, of the suitors dead. 475

In throngs they rise, and to the palace crowd ;

Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.

Weeping, they bear the mangled heaps of slain,
 Inhume the natives in their native plain,
 The rest in ships are wafted o'er the main. 480

Then sad in council all the seniors sate,
 Frequent and full, assembled to debate.

Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
 Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes:
 The bold Antinous was his age's pride, 485
 The first who by Ulysses' arrow died.

Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
 As, mixing words with sighs, he thus began:

Great deeds, O friends! this wond'rous man
 has wrought,

And mighty blessings to his country brought. 490

With ships he parted and a num'rous train;
 Those, and their ships, he buried in the main:
 Now he returns, and first essays his hand
 In the best blood of all his native land.

Haste then, and ere to neighb'ring Pyle he flies,
 Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies, 496

Arise (or ye for ever fall), arise!

Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed,
 If unreveng'd your sons and brothers bleed!

Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head, 500
 Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.

Here ceas'd he, but indignant tears let fall
 Spoke when he ceas'd!—dumb sorrow touch'd
 them all.

When from the palace to the wond'ring throng
 Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along; 505
 (Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke)
 And Medon first th' assembled chiefs bespoke:

Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
 Who deem this act the work of mortal hand!
 As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode, 510
 These eyes, these eyes beheld a present god,
 Who now before him, now beside him stood,
 Fought as he fought, and mark'd his way with
 blood:

In vain old Mentor's form the god belied;
 'Twas heav'n that struck, and heav'n was on his
 side. 515

A sudden horror all th' assembly shook;
 When, slowly rising, Halitherses spoke
 (Rev'rend and wise, whose comprehensive view
 At once the present and the future knew):
 Me too, ye fathers, hear!—from you proceed 520
 The ills ye mourn; your own the guilty deed.
 Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons, the rein
 (Oft warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain):

An absent hero's bed they sought to soil; 524

An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil :

Inmod'rate riot, and intemp'rate lust!

Th' offence was great, the punishment was just.

Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale,

Nor rush to ruin. Justice will prevail. 529

His mod'rate words some better minds persuade:

They part, and join him, but the number staid.

They storm, they shout, with hasty frenzy fir'd,

And second all Eupithes' rage inspir'd.

They case their limbs in brass; to arms they run:

The broad effulgence blazes in the sun. 535

Before the city, and in ample plain,

They meet: Eupithes heads the frantic train.

Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air;

Fate hears them not, and death attends him there.

This past on earth, while in the realms above

Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove : 541

May I presume to search thy secret soul?

O pow'r supreme, O ruler of the whole!

Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state,

Or peaceful amity, or stern debate? 545

Declare thy purpose; for thy will is fate.

Is not thy thought my own? (the god replies

Who rolls the thunder o'er the reulted skies)

Hath not long since thy knowing soul decreed,
 The chief's return should make the guilty bleed?
 'Tis done; and at thy will the fates succeed. 551
 Yet hear the issue:—since Ulysses' hand
 Has slain the suitors, heav'n shall bless the land.
 None now the kindred of th' unjust shall own;
 Forgot the slaughter'd brother, and the son: 555
 Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,
 And o'er the past, oblivion stretch her wing.
 Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,
 His people blessing, by his people blest.
 LET ALL BE PEACE—He said, and gave the nod
 That binds the fates; the sanction of the god: 561
 And prompt to execute th' eternal will,
 Descended Pallas from th' Olympian hill.

Now sat Ulysses at the rural feast,
 The rage of hunger and of thirst repress: 565
 To watch the foe a trusty spy he sent:
 A son of Dolius on the message went,
 Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
 The foe approach, embattled on the field.
 With backward step he hastens to the bow'r, 570
 And tells the news. They arm with all their pow'r.
 Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace;
 And six were all the sons of Dolius' race:

Old Dolius toò his rusted arms put on;
 And, still more old, in arms Laertes shone, 575
 Trembling with warmth, the hoary heroes stand,
 And brazen panoply invests the band.

The op'ning gates at once their war display:
 Fierce they rush forth: Ulysses leads the way.
 That moment joins them with celestial aid, 580
 In Mentor's form, the Jove-descended maid:
 The suff'ring hero felt his patient breast
 Swell with new joy, and thus his son address:

Behold, Telemachus! (nor fear the sight!)
 The brave embattled; the grim front of fight! 585
 The valiant with the valiant must contend:
 Shame not the line whence glorious you descend:
 Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread;
 Regard thyself, the living, and the dead.

Thy eyes, great father! on this battle cast, 590
 Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste.

So spoke Telemachus! the gallant boy
 Good old Laertes heard with panting joy;
 And, blest! thrice blest this happy day! he cries,
 The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes, 595
 A son and grandson of th' Arcesian name
 Strive for fair virtue, and contest for fame!

Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear:

Son of Arccsius, rev'rend warrior, hear!

Jove and Jove's daughter first implore in pray'r,

Then,whirling high, discharge thy lance in air. 601

She said, infusing courage with the word.

Jove and Jove's daughter then the chief implor'd,

And, whirling high, dismiss'd the lance in air:

Full at Eupithes drove the deathful spear: 605

The brass-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound;

He falls; earth thunders, and his arms resound.

Before the father and the conqu'ring son

Heaps rush on heaps; they fight, they drop, they

run.

Now by the sword and now the jav'lin fall 610

The rebel race! and death had swallow'd all;

But from on high the blue-ey'd virgin cried;

Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tide:

“ Forbear, ye nations! your mad hands forbear

“ From mutual slaughter: PEACE DESCENDS TO

SPARE.”

Fear shook the nations: at the voice divine 616

They drop their jav'lins, and their rage resign.

All scatter'd round their glitt'ring weapons lie;

Some fall to earth, and some confus'dly fly.

With dreadful shouts Ulysses pour'd along, 620

Swift as an eagle, as an eagle strong.

But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims;

Before Minerva shot the livid flames;

Blazing they fell, and at her feet expir'd:

Then stopt the goddess, trembled, and retir'd. 625

‘ Descended from the gods! Ulysses, cease:

Offend not Jove: obey, and give the peace.’

So Pallas spoke: the mandate from above

The king obey'd. The virgin-seed of Jove, “

In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord, 630

“ And willing nations knew their lawful lord.”

SELECT NOTES

to

BOOK XXIV.

V. 17. *And Leucas' rock*.....] This description of the descent into hell is more particular than that in the xith Odyssey; and each particular is well suited to the subject: the descent is fabled to be by the ocean, because the sun seems to descend through it into night or the region of darkness, in the western parts of heaven. The circumstance likewise of going through the region of 'dreams' is well chosen. Dreams are the attendants of sleep, the brother of death: they come by night; and are therefore well imagined to have relation to the kingdom of death, and to be introductory to it. The only circumstance liable to objection is, the Leucadian, or 'white' rock, which Aristarchus thought improperly placed in the road to the realms of darkness: but (replies Eustathius) this is only meant of a rock standing on the extremities of the earth, or a rock on which the last rays of the sun fall. Dacier imagines, that there is a further meaning in the expression: 'There is an island over-against Acarnania, on the west of Ithaca, called Leucas, from a white rock standing in it: this rock was famous in antiquity, because lovers in despair threw themselves from the top of it into the ocean; it was called the 'Lover's Leap,' and being thus remarkable for the deaths of numbers, Homer places it here.'

V. 35. *O mighty chief! (Pelides thus began) &c.*] This appears to be introduced somewhat unnaturally. Achilles had now been dead about ten years; and Agamemnon almost as long: it can therefore scarce be reconciled to probability, to imagine that they should not have met before this time, and mutually have satisfied their curiosities, by relating their several stories at some former interview. Dacier indeed remarks, that we are not to imagine this conference was held at the time when the suitors descended; but upon some preceding occasion, immediately after the death of Agamemnon. If this be allowed, yet the objection

remains, that the introduction is forced and unnatural: for then the descent of Mercury and the shades of the suitors will be no reason why this conference should be here repeated; for so, neither Mercury nor the suitors hear it. But Dacier is undoubtedly in an error; for *ἐνθα* in the original is the third person plural, and absolutely refers to Mercury and the shades of the suitors; and therefore it follows that this conference happened at the time of their entrance.

The shades of the suitors (observes Dacier) when they are summoned by Mercury out of the palace of Ulysses, emit a feeble, plaintive, inarticulate sound; *τρίζουσι*, 'strident:' whereas Agamemnon, and the shades that have long been in the state of the dead, speak articulately. I doubt not but Homer intended to shew by the former description, that when the soul is separated from the organs of the body, it ceases to act after the same manner, as while it was joined to it; but how the dead recover their voices afterwards is not easy to understand. In other respects Virgil paints after Homer:

' pars tollere vocem

Exiguam: inceptus clamor frustratur hiantes.'

(Æn. vi. 492, 3.)

' They rais'd a feeble cry, with trembling notes ;

But the weak voice deceiv'd their gasping throats.'

DRYDEN.

But why should we suppose with Dacier, that these shades of the suitors have lost the faculty of speaking? I rather imagine, that the sounds they uttered were signs of complaint and discontent, and proceeded not from an inability to speak. After Patroclus was slain, he appears to Achilles, and speaks very articulately to him; yet to express his sorrow at his departure he acts like these suitors: for Achilles

' Like a thin smoke beholds the spirit fly,

And hears a feeble, lamentable cry.'

Dacier conjectures, that the power of speech ceases in the dead, till they are admitted into a state of rest: but Patroclus is an in-

stance to the contrary in the Iliad, and Elpenor in the Odyssey; for they both speak before their funeral rites are performed, and consequently before they enter into a state of repose amongst the shades of the happy.

V. 68. *Terror seiz'd the Grecian train.*] This description furnished Aristarchus with another objection to this book: he thought it improbable that the appearance of Thetis and her sea-nymphs should terrify the whole Grecian army. They say in answer, that all the ocean was in a great commotion as Thetis ascended; or as Homer expresses it,

. βῆ δ' ἐπὶ πόντον ὀρώρει
θεοπέσιν (Ω. 48, 9.)

This uproar occasioned their fear: the Greeks were ignorant of the cause of it, and consequently apprehended some dreadful event: this is evident; for Nestor appeases their consternation by unfolding the reason of the tumult, and shewing them that it was occasioned by the ascent of Thetis.

The reader has undoubtedly observed how excellently Homer sustains his characters. Nestor is the wisest man, both in the Iliad and Odyssey: he has the experience of a very great age; and may therefore be supposed to be acquainted with all the most uncommon appearances in nature. The poet accordingly describes him as the only person not afraid in the Grecian army. There were others undoubtedly as brave as Nestor; but not one so wise: his intrepidity is therefore to be imputed to his wisdom, not bravery. And this furnishes us with an excellent moral;—That ignorance is usually the source of fear.

The character of Achilles is no less happily supported: the same love of glory is visible in all he speaks, that distinguished his character through the Iliad: he still prefers a short life with fame, before old age without it:

ὦς ὄφρα τις τιμῆς ἀπονήμεν[Ⓢ] ἢς περ ἀνάσσει,
δὴ μὲν ἐν Τρώων θάνατον καὶ πότμον ἐπισπένν. (V. 30, 1.)

The sentiment is truly heroic; dishonour is worse than death, the happiness or misery of which is not to be measured by time, but glory; long life is but lengthened mortality, and they who

live the longest have but the small privilege of creeping more leisurely than others to their graves.

V. 77. *Round thee, the muses ...*] It is impossible (observes Dacier) not to be struck with the noble fictions of Homer in honour of Achilles; every circumstance is great. A whole army is in tears; the muses celebrate his glory; a goddess and her nymphs ennoble it with their presence and lamentations. At the funerals of other heroes, women and captives are the mourners; here the muses personally appear. Heaven and earth, men and gods, interest themselves in the obsequies of so great an hero! Yet from this place Aristarchus draws an argument for rejecting this book: Homer (says he) no where else gives the number of the nine muses; insinuating that their number was not fixed in his age. But Homer frequently invokes the muses, why then should he be ignorant of the number; and if not ignorant of it, why might he not mention it? Aristarchus further adds, that it is absurd to imagine the body of Achilles could be preserved seventeen days without burial; but this may be ascribed to the power of Thetis, who may easily be supposed to preserve it. Beside, why may not the body be embalmed? and then there will be no occasion for a miracle, and the interposition of a goddess: we must remember what she did to the body of Patroclus in the Iliad.

V. 127. *But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,
His ancient host Amphimedon survey'd.*]

An objection has been raised against this passage, and it has been thought an absurdity that Agamemnon should be the guest of Amphimedon, and not of Ulysses, when he came to make an address to him, and was within his territories. Didymus answers; that this conduct in Agamemnon was occasioned by the refusal of Ulysses to assist in the war of Troy: Agamemnon resented his denial, and went to the house of Amphimedon.

V. 142. *Forc'd a long month*

To move the great Ulysses to the war.]

It is not obvious why Ulysses, who was a person of the greatest

bravery, should be unwilling to engage in such an action of glory, as the war of Troy. Was it because he foresaw that it would be a work of danger (as Eustathius imagines); or was he dissatisfied in the ground of it, which was only to revenge the rape of Helen, and nothing but a private injury? The former is a reason unworthy of his heroic character; the latter is no more than a conjecture. It may possibly be a truer reason, that he was unwilling to forsake his wife, of whom he was very fond, and whom he newly had married; but then it must be allowed, that he prefers his love to his glory. Eustathius recites the manner how he was drawn to engage in the war of Troy. Ulysses, to deliver himself from the importunities of his friends to assist Agamemnon, pretended madness, and yoked two animals of a different kind to a plough, and began to work with them: Palamedes, who suspected the imposture, took his son Telemachus, an infant, and laid him in the furrow before the plough; Ulysses turned aside not to hurt his child, and this discovered the imposition.

V. 195. *Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose, &c.*] We have already seen, that it was the contrivance of Penelope to propose the bow, to gain time to defer the marriage hour; how then comes Amphimedon to ascribe it to the art of Ulysses? Eustathius answers, that Amphimedon is in an error, and that though the contrivance was from Penelope, yet Amphimedon could not come to the knowledge of it; and such stratagems being agreeable to the character of Ulysses, he imputes this action to him, rather than Penelope.

V. 232. *Thus in the regions of eternal shade.*] I think it will not be improper here to particularize whence antiquity raised the fictions concerning hell, and the nature of it, as we have it in Diodorus Siculus.

Pluto (observes that author) was the first that introduced the rites of sepulture, and other ceremonies bestowed on the dead: this is the reason why the ancients imagined him to be the king of the dead.

Rhadamanthus is said to have been the most just man in the world. He severely punished robbers and other notorious offenders, and from his singular reputation for integrity was feigned to

be the judge of the good and bad after death: and for the same reason Minos was joined with him in the same dignity.

Homer borrowed his fictions from Orpheus, Orpheus from the Egyptians. It was Orpheus who introduced the opinion of the pains of the damned, and of the Elysian fields, and taught that the souls of the dead were conducted by Mercury into the infernal mansions (a proof that he was called *ψυχοπομπος* before the days of Homer). Diodorus proceeds, and mentions the beginning of this book, how Homer feigns that Mercury leads the shades of the dead by the ocean, the Leucadian rock, and the gates of the sun: a plain instance that he looked upon this book as the genuine work of Homer. All these fables (continues Diodorus) are of Egyptian extract: by the ocean, Homer means Nilus; by the gates of the sun, he means Heliopolis, a city sacred to the sun; the meadow into which the shades are conducted, denotes the pleasant meadows full of canes, adjoining to Memphis; and the dead are feigned to reside there, because it was the general burial-place amongst the Egyptians. Concerning Cocytus, Acheron, &c. the reader may consult the first note upon the eleventh *Odyssey*.

Plutarch, in his treatise of Isis and Osiris, agrees with Diodorus concerning the extraction of these fables from Egypt: and mentions at Memphis the gates of lamentation and oblivion; that is, of Cocytus, and Lethe; which being opened at the burial of the dead, give a doleful and groaning sound. Hence they are thus described by Homer in the tenth *Odyssey*:

‘ And where slow-rolling from the Stygian bed
Cocytus’ lamentable waters spread;
Where the dark rock o’erhangs th’ infernal lake,
And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.’

These observations give light to most of Homer’s fictions concerning hell; and shew that his poetry is built upon the customs of antiquity.

V. 236. *The ground himself had purchas’d with his pain.*] Eustathius very well explains these words: which in the Greek may be construed to signify that Laertes had purchased this place of

retirement by his labour and industry. But probably Homer intends to express an allotment or portion of ground which was assigned Laertes by the public, as a reward for his heroic labours in war, and bravery in conquering his enemies: like that mentioned in the Iliad:

‘The Lycians grant a chosen space of ground,

With woods, with vineyards, and with harvests crown’d.’

It may either be so, or Homer, intending solely to paint the laborious life of Laertes, added this circumstance of his increasing his rural cell by his industry, as an instance of it.

V. 266. *Gloves against the thorn.*] Casaubon in his Remarks upon Athenæus, lib. xii. cap. 2, affirms, that anciently neither the Greeks nor the Romans ever wore any covering on their hands, which are now used so universally, that they are worn by the meanest people. But this place is an instance of Casaubon’s mistake. It is true, Xenophon gives this practice as an argument of the luxury and delicacy of the Persians; who suffered no part of the body to be exposed to the air, but wore *καὶ περὶ ἀγκυαῖς ταῖς χερσὶ χειρίδας, καὶ δακτύληθρας ἔχουσι*, ‘gloves upon their hands, and coverings on their very fingers.’ Pliny the younger mentions the same custom amongst the Romans; ‘*Manus Hieme manicis muniébantur! ut ne coeli quidem asperitas ullum studiis tempus eriperet.*’ This then is the difference: the Persians wore these hand-coverings out of effeminacy and delicacy; whereas in Greece they were used only out of necessity, as a defence in rural labour; as appears from Laertes, they being never mentioned upon any other occasion, either in the Iliad or Odyssey. DACIER.

V. 267. *In this array the kingly gard’ner stood,*

And clear’d a plant, encumber’d with its wood.]”

This is the first appearance of Laertes: he is the very picture of melancholy; his dress, his employ, and solitary life, all discover a fixed sorrow, and contempt of the world. It has been a dispute whether we are to ascribe this retreat of Laertes to a meanness of spirit, who forsakes his station, and is unequal to adversity; or to wisdom, and a noble neglect of the pomp and splendour of the

world, by which he prefers a little rural retreat to all the magnificence of a palace, and a small garden to all the dominions of a king.

V. 279. *Not so: his judgment takes the winding way.*] It has been objected, that Ulysses here acts contrary to filial piety, and permits a tender father to continue in his sorrows, when it was in his power immediately to make him happy, by a discovery of his person; they likewise condemn the *κερομια εμεα*, which Homer put in the mouth of Ulysses. It must be allowed, that those words are frequently used by the poet in a bad sense, and signify ‘heart-wounding,’ or ‘reproachful words:’ but here they are not so to be understood; they only imply, ‘that Ulysses blamed Laertes out of tenderness for taking no more care of his person:’ this is not a reproach, but the language of fondness and affection: or perhaps the poet meant to express that this enquiry raised images of sorrow in the soul of Laertes, and ‘wounded his heart,’ by naming the lost Ulysses. Eustathius solves the former objection by saying that Ulysses delayed the discovery lest the suddenness of joy should prove fatal to Laertes. But Homer undoubtedly paints according to nature. Ulysses bursts into tears at the sight of his father, yet restrains them, and tries if after twenty years absence he was known by him. This delay raises the reader’s curiosity, makes him, as it were, present at the interview, and impatient to hear the manner of the discovery: beside, this procedure excellently agrees with the general character of Ulysses, who is upon all emergencies master of his passions, and remarkable for disguise and an artful dissimulation. This disguise has a very happy effect in this place: it holds us in a pleasing suspense, and makes us wait with attention to see the issue of the interview.

V. 298. *I read a monarch in that princely air.*] The words in the Greek are not without obscurity; and Eustathius explains them two ways: they may either signify that Laertes appears to be a person of such distinction that he ought to live with more delicacy and dignity, viz. ‘to bathe, and after a due repast to sleep in state;’ or they imply, that Laertes shews the dignity of a king in his person, who comes from the bath, and dines in state. Ulysses cannot compare Laertes to a king who is fresh from the

bath, and drest royally, for he tells us, he is covered with sweat and dust; he therefore means that his personage is noble, and like a king, that therefore he ought to live like a king, with respect to his food and his bath, and to indulge his age by allowing it ease and refreshment.

V. 353. *From Alybas I came.*] Ulysses is inexhaustible in his fictions: he here accommodates the names of persons and places to his fortunes: Alybas is supposed to be a city of Italy, afterwards called Metapontium. It is placed by others in Thrace. It is here introduced to denote the wanderings of Ulysses by the sea, or αλη: the word Aphidas denotes his generosity, which ‘spares nothing’ towards his friends. He feigns himself to be the grandson of Πολυπημων, to represent the multitude of his sufferings; his name is Eperitus, from επηριστος, the same with περιμαχητος, from επιζω, to shew the struggle that he has met with in all his adventures, as well as the toils in the war of Troy, and against other enemies. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 369. *and sorrowing spread*

A cloud of ashes on his hoary head.]

This was a common practice among the ancient Orientals, in token of the extremity of sorrow: it was used among the Hebrews as well as Greeks; thus Ezek. xxvii. 30. ‘They shall cast dust upon their heads.’ Job. ii. 12. ‘They rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads.’ Thus also Achilles, in the eighteenth of the Iliad: α

‘His purple garments, and his golden hairs,
Those he deforms indust, and these in tears.’

Homer calls it κοινὴ αἰθαλεσσάν, which does not mean that Laertes threw glowing embers on his head, for he was in the garden, where such ashes were not to be found, but he means ξηραν, or ‘dry dust,’ such as arises from substances consumed by fire, or resembling ashes. EUSTATHIUS.

V. 371. *Trembling with agonies, &c.*] The Greek expression is remarkable:

‘. αἰα γιναι δὲ οἱ νῦν
Δριμύ μιν πρὸ πυρὸς’

‘A sharp sensation struck his nostrils.’ Eustathius judges, that the meaning is, that Ulysses perceived himself ready to burst into tears; a kind of a pricking sharp sensation being felt in the nostrils before the eruption of tears. Casaubon more fully explains it; he observes that all violent passions cause a sensation in the nostrils; arising from the ebullition of the spirits, which mount toward the brain, and endeavouring to free themselves from restraint, find a vent by the nostril, and crowding through it, dilate it in their passage: this is evident from animals, and the nobler kinds of them, as the bull, the horse, the lion, whose nostrils always dilate when moved to anger. A similar expression is found in the first Idyllium of Theocrytus:

Και ὅτε αὖτις δριμύτι χόλα ποτὶ εἶναι παθήσει.

He speaks of the anger of the god Pan; but it is applicable to all violence of passion. Aristotle (observes Dacier) quotes this verse as applied by Homer to express anger, cap. 9, of his *Morals to Nicomachus*, but he is evidently in an error; for there is here no mention of anger: he undoubtedly trusted to his memory; it being sorrow arising from filial tenderness which moves Ulysses. DACIER.

V. 389. *The sev’ral trees you gave me long ago,
While yet a child.]*

The word in the original is *παιδιος* which signifies ‘a very young boy:’ Homer uses it to express the age, when out of a childish simplicity Ulysses asked his father to grant him such trees. Such requests are very natural in children, and we see (says Dacier) the same practised every day; parents out of fondness indulge the requests of their children in such little particularities, and a bird, a horse, &c. continues the child’s favourite for many years. It must be allowed, that no poet ever followed nature so faithfully as Homer. Virgil perhaps has reached his noblest elevations and sublimities; but there is a greater variety of natural incidents, more exact pictures of human life in Homer than in all other poets. Some painters excel in the boldness of their figures, and know how to draw a hero or a god, but are less happy in lower

subjects: but Homer draws universally, and is excellent upon all occasions; he paints the largest figures, or the least sketches, equally natural, and with equal beauty.

V. 438. *And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.*) I doubt not but the reader has observed, that Laertes uses the very turn of language and manner of self-commendation so remarkable in almost all the speeches of Nestor: this is to be ascribed to the nature of old age in general, which loves a little to boast, and relates the exploits of youth with the utmost satisfaction; or, as Horace describes it,

‘ Laudatur temporis acti

Se puero’ A. P. 173, 4.

I will only add, that the reason why Homer describes Laertes enlarged with strength and majesty by Minerva, is to reconcile the future story to probability; Laertes acts the hero, engages at the head of his friends, and kills the leader of his enemies; this might appear to be an exploit too great for a weak old man wasted away with sorrows: the poet therefore, knowing that he had lost his natural vigour through age, supplies the defect with preternatural strength; and by this method renders him equal to his future action.

V. 450. *Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the sire.*] We are not to imagine that this Sicilian was the wife of Dolius. Homer gives her the title of mother to his children, because she had the care of their education: for he adds, ἡ σφραγὶς τρεφεῖ, she was their nurse; not their mother. DACIER.

V. 480. *The rest in ships are wafted o'er the main.*] To understand this, we must remember that many of the suitors came from the neighbouring islands, Samos, Zacynthus, &c. and therefore they are said to be transported by sea, to be buried in their native countries: this custom prevailed over all the oriental world: but there may be a particular reason why this is done by the Ithacans; they might intend to raise those several islands to engage against Ulysses, and draw them to arms by such moving spectacles. DACIER.

V. 508. *Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land.*] There is

great art in the speeches of Medon and Eupithes. Eupithes said that Ulysses had slain the bravest of the Greeks; Medon allows it, but adds, that it was done by the will of the gods: the consequence therefore is, that to fight against Ulysses upon this account, is to fight against the gods. Eupithes applies to their revenge; Medon to their fears: Eupithes sheds tears to move their compassion; Medon intimidates them by averring that the assistance of the gods was visible on the side of Ulysses. The persons likewise whom Homer employs to plead against Eupithes are well chosen: Halitherses is a prophet, Medon an herald, and both persons esteemed sacred by their offices; this is the reason why the Greeks are said to be struck with awe at their appearance. DACIER, &c.

V. 517. *Halitherses spoke.*] The speech of Medon had a good effect upon the audience; for Homer adds, that the whole assembly grew afraid: Halitherses perceived it, and seconds it. He insists upon a new head of persuasion; and sets forth the justice of the late action of Ulysses: the suitors were slain (says he) for their crimes; and you are guilty for not restraining their outrages. And then to deter them from their present designs, he represents their danger in engaging against their king. From these speeches (observes Eustathius) Homer draws the probability of the future part of the story: he divides the enemy, and wins over almost half of their numbers; whereas, had they proceeded unanimously, Ulysses must necessarily have perished by their power.

It is observable, that though Phemius accompanies Medon, yet he is silent. The reason is, he as it were speaks by the mouth of Medon: he was witness to the assistance of heaven on the part of Ulysses; and approves and confirms by his presence the truth of his testimony. It is thus on the stage: where the whole chorus was anciently supposed to speak by the mouth of their prolocutor. DACIER, &c.

V. 572. *Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace*] The poet tells us the exact number of the party of Ulysses; which consisted of ten persons, under the direction of Dolius, Laertes, and Ulysses. How many were under Eupithes is uncertain: we there-

fore are at liberty to suppose them more or less superior in number. Medon and Halitherses had withdrawn almost half of his assistants; and by that method reduced the enemy to a greater equality. It is probable they had no very extraordinary inequality; for the onset is so sudden, that the friends of the dead suitors could not have time to embody: besides, it appears from the sixteenth *Odyssey*, that of the whole band of suitors, twelve only were Ithacans: the rest came from the adjacent islands; and therefore none of their friends could as yet be arrived to assist Eupithes. And consequently this party consisted solely of Ithacans; and were not perhaps greatly superior to Ulysses. This observation likewise furnishes us with a reason why the enemy was so easily defeated, by so small a body of men as engaged for Ulysses.

V. 629. *The virgin-seed of Jove,
In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord.]*

The meaning of the passage is no more than this, when stript of its poetical ornaments: Mentor, a person of great wisdom, acts as a mediator between the king and his subjects: he regulates the conditions of peace, and ratifies it with sacrifices to the gods. This being an act of wisdom, poetry ascribes it to Minerva.

I must observe with what dignity Homer concludes the *Odyssey*. To honour his hero, he introduces two deities, Jupiter and Pallas, who interest themselves in his cause: he then paints Ulysses in the boldest colours, as he rushes upon the enemy with the utmost intrepidity, and his courage is so ungovernable, that Jupiter is forced to restrain it with his thunder. It is usual for orators to reserve the strongest arguments for the conclusion, that they may leave them fresh upon the reader's memory. Homer uses the same conduct: he represents his hero in all his terror, he shews him to be irresistible, and by this method leaves us fully possessed with a noble idea of his magnanimity.

It has been already observed, that the end of the action of the *Odyssey* is the re-establishment of Ulysses in full peace and tran-

quillity. This is not effected, till the defeat of the suitors' friends: and therefore if the poet had concluded before this event, the *Odyssey* had been imperfect. It was necessary that the reader should not only be informed of the return of Ulysses to his country and the punishment of the suitors, but of his re-establishment by a peaceful possession of his regal authority: which is not executed, till these last disorders raised by Eupithes are settled by the victory of Ulysses; and therefore this is the natural conclusion of the action.

This book opens with the morning, and ends before night: so that the whole story of the *Odyssey* is comprehended in the compass of one and forty days. Monsieur Dacier upon Aristotle remarks, that an epic poem ought not to be too long: we should be able to retain all the several parts of it at once in our memory: if we lose the idea of the beginning when we come to the conclusion, it is an argument that it is of too large an extent; and its length destroys its beauty. What seems to favour this decision is, that the *Æneid*, *Iliad*, and *Odyssey*, are conformable to this rule of Aristotle, and every one of those poems may be read in the compass of a single day.

I have now gone through the collections upon the *Odyssey*, and laid together what occurred most remarkable in this excellent poem. I am not so vain as to think these remarks free from faults; nor so disingenuous as not to confess them: all writers have occasion for indulgence; and those most who least acknowledge it. I have sometimes used Madam Dacier as she has done others, in transcribing some of her remarks without particularizing them; but indeed it was through inadvertency only that her name is sometimes omitted at the bottom of the note. If my performance has merit, either in these, or in my part of the translation (namely, in the sixth, eleventh, and eighteenth books), it is but just to attribute it to the judgment and care of Mr. Pope, by whose hand every sheet was corrected. His other, and much more able assistant, was Mr. Fenton, in the fourth and the twentieth books. It was our particular request, that our several parts

might not be made known to the world till the end of it: and if they have had the good fortune not to be distinguished from his, we ought to be the less vain, since the resemblance proceeds much less from our diligence and study to copy his manner, than from his own daily revisal and correction. The most experienced painters will not wonder at this; who very well know, that no critic can pronounce even of the pieces of Raphael or Titian, which have, or which have not, been worked upon by those of their school, when the same master's hand has directed the execution of the whole, reduced it to one character and colouring, gone over the several parts, and given to each their finishing.

I must not conclude without declaring our mutual satisfaction in Mr. Pope's acceptance of our best endeavours; which have contributed at least to his more speedy execution of this great undertaking. If ever my name be numbered with the learned, I must ascribe it to his friendship; in transmitting it to posterity by a participation in his labours. May the sense I have of this, and other instances of that friendship, be known as long as his name will cause mine to last! and may I to this end be permitted, at the conclusion of a work which is a kind of monument of his partiality to me, to place the following lines, as an inscription memorial of it:

LET vulgar souls triumphal arches raise,
Or speaking marbles, to record their praise;
And picture (to the voice of fame unknown)
The mimic feature on the breathing stone:
Mere mortals! subject to death's total sway;
Reptiles of earth, and beings of a day!

'Tis thine, on ev'ry heart to grave thy praise;
A monument which worth alone can raise:
' Sure to survive, when time shall whelm in dust
The arch, the marble, and the mimic bust:
Nor till the volumes of th' expanded sky
Blaze in one flame, shalt thou and Homer die;
Then sink together, in the world's last fires,

If aught on earth, when once this breath is fled,
 With human transport touch the mighty dead,
 Shakespear, rejoice ! his hand thy page refines ;
 Now ev'ry scene with native brightness shines ;
 Just to thy fame, he gives thy genuine thought ;
 So Tully publish'd what Lucretius wrote :
 Prun'd by his care, thy laurels loftier grow,
 And bloom afresh on thy immortal brow.

Thus when thy draughts, O Raphael ! time invades,
 And the bold figure from the canvas fades,
 A rival hand recalls from ev'ry part
 Some latent grace, and equals art with art :
 Transported we survey the dubious strife,
 While each fair image starts again to life.

How long, untun'd, had Homer's sacred lyre
 Jarr'd grating discord, all-extinct his fire ?
 This you beheld ; and, taught by heav'n to sing,
 Call'd the loud music from the sounding string :
 Now wak'd from slumbers of three thousand years,
 Once more Achilles in dread pomp appears,
 Tow'rs o'er the field of death ; as fierce he turns,
 Keen flash his arms, and all the hero burns ;
 With martial stalk, and more than mortal might,
 He strides along, and meets the gods in fight :
 Then the pale Titans, chain'd on burning floors,
 Start at the din that rends th' infernal shores ;
 Tremble the tow'rs of heav'n, earth rocks her coasts,
 And gloomy Pluto shakes with all his ghosts.
 To ev'ry theme responds thy various lay ;
 Here rolls a torrent, there meanders play :—
 Sonorous as the storm thy numbers rise,
 Toss the wild waves, and thunder in the skies ;
 Or softer than a yielding virgin's sigh,
 The gentle breezes breathe away and die.
 Thus, like the radiant god who sheds the day,
 You paint the vale, or gild the azure way ;

And, while with ev'ry theme the verse compiles,
Sink without grov'ling, without rashness rise.

Proceed, great bard! awake th' harmonious string,
Be ours all Homer! still Ulysses sing.
How long that hero, by unskilful hands
Stript of his robes, a beggar trod our lands :
Such as he wander'd o'er his native coast,
Shrunk by the wand, and all the warrior lost!
O'er his smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread ;
Old age disgrac'd the honours of his head :
Nor longer in his heavy eye-ball shin'd
The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind.
But you, like Pallas, ev'ry limb infold
With royal robes, and bid him shine in gold :
Touch'd by your hand, his manly frame improves
With grace divine, and like a god he moves.

E'en I, the meanest of the muses' train,
Inflam'd by thee, attempt a nobler strain ;
Advent'rous waken the Mæonian lyre,
Tun'd by your hand, and sing as you inspire :
So arm'd by great Achilles for the fight,
Patroclus conquer'd in Achilles' right :
Like theirs, our friendship! and I boast my name
To thine united—for thy FRIENDSHIP'S FAME.

This labour past, of heav'nly subjects sing,
While hov'ring angels listen on the wing,
To hear from earth such heart-felt raptures rise,
As, when they sing, suspended hold the skies :
Or nobly rising in fair virtue's cause,
From thy own life transcribe th' unerring laws ;
Teach a bad world beneath her sway to bend :
To verse like thine fierce savages attend,
And men more fierce :—when Orpheus tunes the lay,
E'en fiends relenting hear their rage away.

POSTSCRIPT,

BY

MR. POPE.

I CANNOT dismiss this work without a few observations on the true character and style of it. Whoever reads the *Odyssey* with an eye to the *Iliad*, expecting to find it of the same character, or of the same sort of spirit, will be grievously deceived; and err against the first principle of criticism, which is to consider the nature of the piece, and the intent of its author. The *Odyssey* is a moral and political work, instructive to all degrees of men, and filled with images, examples, and precepts of civil and domestic life. Homer is here a person

‘ Qui didicit, patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis,
Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus, et hospes.
Qui quid sit pulcrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius et melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.’

A. P. 312, 1 Ep. ii. 3, 4.

The *Odyssey* is the reverse of the *Iliad*, in moral, subject, manner, and style; to which it has no sort of relation, but as the story happens to follow in order of time, and as some of the same persons are actors in it. Yet from this incidental connexion many have been misled to regard it as a continuation or second part,

and thence to expect a parity of character inconsistent with its nature.

It is no wonder that the common reader should fall into this mistake, when so great a critic as Longinus seems not wholly free from it; although what he has said has been generally understood to import a severer censure of the *Odyssey* than it really does, if we consider the occasion on which it is introduced, and the circumstances to which it is confined.

‘ The *Odyssey* (says he) is an instance, how natural it is to a great genius, when it begins to grow old and decline, to delight itself in narrations and fables: for, that Homer composed the *Odyssey* after the *Iliad*, many proofs may be given, &c. From hence in my judgment it proceeds, that as the *Iliad* was written while his spirit was in its greatest vigour, the whole structure of that work is dramatic and full of action: whereas the greater part of the *Odyssey* is employed in narration, which is the taste of old age; so that in this latter piece we may compare him to the setting sun, which has still the same greatness, but not the same ardour, or force. He speaks not in the same strain: we see no more that sublime of the *Iliad* which marches on with a constant pace, without ever being stopped, or retarded: there appears no more that hurry, and that strong tide of motions and passions, pouring one after another: there is no more the same fury, or the same volubility of diction, so suitable to action, and all along drawing in such innumerable images of nature. But Homer, like the ocean, is always great, even when

he ebbs and retires; even when he is lowest, and loses himself most in narrations and incredible fictions: as instances of this, we cannot forget the descriptions of tempests, the adventures of Ulysses with the Cyclops, and many others. But though all this be age, it is the age of Homer:—and it may be said for the credit of these fictions, that they are beautiful dreams, or if you will, the dreams of Jupiter himself. I spoke of the *Odyssey* only to show, that the greatest poets when their genius wants strength and warmth for the pathetic, for the most part employ themselves in painting the manners. This Homer has done, in characterizing the suitors, and describing their way of life; which is properly a branch of comedy, whose peculiar business it is to represent the manners of men.

We must first observe, it is the sublime of which Longinus is writing: that, and not the nature of Homer's poem, is his subject. After having highly extolled the sublimity and fire of the *Iliad*, he justly observes the *Odyssey* to have less of those qualities, and to turn more on the side of moral, and reflections on human life. Nor is it his business here to determine, whether the elevated spirit of the one, or the just moral of the other, be the greater excellence in itself.

Secondly, that fire and fury of which he is speaking, cannot well be meant of the general spirit and inspiration which is to run through a whole epic poem, but of that particular warmth and impetuosity necessary in some parts, to image or represent actions or

passions, of haste, tumult, and violence. It is on occasion of citing some such particular passages in Homer, that Longinus breaks into this reflection; which seems to determine his meaning chiefly to that sense.

Upon the whole, he affirms the *Odyssey* to have less sublimity and fire than the *Iliad*; but he does not say it wants the sublime or wants fire. He affirms it to be narrative; but not that the narration is defective. He affirms it to abound in fictions; not that those fictions are ill invented, or ill executed. He affirms it to be nice and particular in painting the manners; but not that those manners are ill painted. If Homer has fully in these points accomplished his own design, and done all that the nature of his poem demanded or allowed, it still remains perfect in its kind, and as much a master-piece as the *Iliad*.

The amount of the passage is this; that in his own particular taste, and with respect to the sublime, Longinus preferred the *Iliad*: and because the *Odyssey* was less active and lofty, he judged it the work of the old age of Homer.

If this opinion be true, it will only prove, that Homer's age might determine him in the choice of his subject; not that it affected him in the execution of it: and that which would be a very wrong instance to prove the decay of his imagination, is a very good one to evince the strength of his judgment. For had he (as Madam Dacier observes) composed the *Odyssey* in his youth, and the *Iliad* in his age, both must in reason have been exactly the same as they now stand. To

blame Homer for his choice of such a subject, as did not admit the same incidents and the same pomp of style as his former, is to take offence at too much variety, and to imagine, that when a man has written one good thing, he must ever after only copy himself.

The Battle of Constantine, and the School of Athens, are both pieces of Raphael. Shall we censure the School of Athens as faulty, because it has not the fury and fire of the other? or shall we say, that Raphael was grown old; because he chose to represent the manners of old men and philosophers? There is all the silence, tranquillity, and composure in the one, and all the warmth, hurry, and tumult in the other, which the subject of either required: both of them had been imperfect, if they had not been as they are. And let the painter or poet be young or old, who designs and performs in this manner, it proves him to have made the piece at a time of life when he was master not only of his art, but of his discretion.

Aristotle makes no such distinction between the two poems: he constantly cites them with equal praise, and draws the rules and examples of epic writing equally from both. But it is rather to the *Odyssey* that Horace gives the preference, in the *Epistle to Lollius*, and in the *Art of Poetry*. It is remarkable how opposite his opinion is to that of Longinus: and that the particulars he chooses to extol, are those very fictions, and pictures of the manners, which the other seems least to approve. Those fables and manners are of the very essence of the work: but even without that regard,

the fables themselves have both more invention and more instruction, and the manners more moral and example, than those of the *Iliad*.

In some points (and those the most essential to the epic poem) the *Odyssey* is confessed to excel the *Iliad*; and principally in the great end of it, the moral. The conduct, turn, and disposition of the fable is also what the critics allow to be the better model for epic writers to follow: accordingly we find much more of the cast of this poem than of the other in the *Æneid*; and (what next to that is perhaps the greatest example) in the *Telemachus*. In the manners, it is no way inferior: Longinus is so far from finding any defect in these, that he rather taxes Homer with painting them too minutely. As to the narrations, although they are more numerous as the occasions are more frequent, yet they carry no more the marks of old age, and are neither more prolix nor more circumstantial, than the conversations and dialogues of the *Iliad*. Not to mention the length of those of Phoenix in the ninth book, and of Nestor in the eleventh (which may be thought in compliance to their characters), those of Glaucus in the sixth, of Æneas in the twentieth, and some others, must be allowed to exceed any in the whole *Odyssey*. And that the propriety of style, and the numbers, in the narrations of each are equal, will appear to any who compare them.

To form a right judgment, whether the genius of Homer had suffered any decay, we must consider, in

and will bear comparison. And it is certain we shall find in each, the same vivacity and fecundity of invention, the same life and strength of imaging and colouring, the particular descriptions as highly painted, the figures as bold, the metaphors as animated, and the numbers as harmonious and as various.

The Odyssey is a perpetual source of poetry: the stream is not the less full, for being gentle; though it is true (when we speak only with regard to the sublime) that a river, foaming and thundering in cataracts from rocks and precipices, is what more strikes, amazes, and fills the mind, than the same body of water, flowing afterwards through peaceful vales and agreeable scenes of pasturage.

The Odyssey (as I have before said) ought to be considered according to its own nature and design; not with an eye to the Iliad. To censure Homer because it is unlike what it was never meant to resemble, is, as if a gardener who had purposely cultivated two beautiful trees of contrary natures, as a specimen of his skill in the several kinds, should be blamed for not bringing them into pairs; when in root, stem, leaf, and flower, each was so entirely different, that one must have been spoiled in the endeavour to match the other.

Longinus, who saw this poem was 'partly of the nature of comedy,' ought not, for that very reason, to have considered it with a view to the Iliad. How little any such resemblance was the intention of Homer, may appear hence, that although the character of Ulysses there was already drawn, yet here he purposely turns

to another side of it, and shows him not in that full light of glory, but in the shade of common life, with a mixture of such qualities as are requisite to all the lowest accidents of it, struggling with misfortunes, and on a level with the meanest of mankind. As for the other persons, none of them are above what we call the higher comedy: Calypso, though a goddess, is a character of intrigue; the suitors yet more approaching to it; the Phæacians are of the same cast; the Cyclops, Melanthius, and Irus, descend even to droll characters; and the scenes that appear throughout, are generally of the comic kind; banquets, revels, sports, loves, and the pursuit of a woman.

From the nature of the poem, we shall form an idea of the style. The diction is to follow the images, and to take its colour from the complexion of the thoughts. Accordingly the *Odyssey* is not always clothed in the majesty of verse proper to tragedy; but sometimes descends into the plainer narrative, and sometimes even to that familiar dialogue essential to comedy. However, where it cannot support a sublimity, it always preserves a dignity, or at least a propriety.

There is a real beauty in an easy, pure, perspicuous description even of a low action. There are numerous instances of this both in Homer and Virgil: and perhaps those natural passages are not the least pleasing of their works. It is often the same in history, where the representations of common, or even domestic things, in clear, plain, and natural words, are frequently found to make the liveliest impression on the reader.

The question is, how far a poet, in pursuing the description or image of an action, can attach himself to little circumstances, without vulgarity or trifling? what particulars are proper, and enliven the image; or what are impertinent, and clog it? In this matter painting is to be consulted, and the whole regard had to those circumstances which contribute to form a full, and yet not a confused, idea of a thing.

Epithets are of vast service to this effect: and the right use of these is often the only expedient to render the narration poetical.

The great point of judgment is to distinguish when to speak simply, and when figuratively: but whenever the poet is obliged by the nature of his subject to descend to the lower manner of writing, an elevated style would be affected, and therefore ridiculous; and the more he was forced upon figures and metaphors to avoid that lowness, the more the image would be broken, and consequently obscure.

One may add, that the use of the grand style on little subjects, is not only ludicrous, but a sort of transgression against the rules of proportion and mechanics: it is using a vast force to lift a feather.

I believe, now I am upon this head, it will be found a just observation, that the low actions of life cannot be put into a figurative style without being ridiculous; but things natural can. Metaphors raise the latter into dignity, as we see in the *Georgics*: but throw the former into ridicule, as in the *Lotrin*. I think this may very well be accounted for: laughter implies con-

sure; inanimate and irrational beings are not objects of censure; therefore these may be elevated as much as you please, and no ridicule follows: but when rational beings are represented above their real character, it becomes ridiculous in art, because it is vicious in morality. The bees in Virgil, were they rational beings, would be ridiculous by having their actions and manners represented on a level with creatures so superior as men; since it would imply folly or pride, which are the proper objects of ridicule.

The use of pompous expression for low actions or thoughts is the true sublime of Don Quixote. How far unfit it is for epic poetry, appears in its being the perfection of the mock epic. It is so far from being the sublime of tragedy, that it is the cause of all bombast: when poets, instead of being (as they imagine) constantly lofty, only preserve throughout a painful equality of fustian; that continued swell of language (which runs indiscriminately even through their lowest characters, and rattles like some mightiness of meaning in the most indifferent subjects) is of a piece with that perpetual elevation of tone which the players have learned from it; and which is not speaking, but vociferating.

There is still more reason for a variation of style in epic poetry than in tragic, to distinguish between that language of the gods proper to the muse who sings, and is inspired, and that of men who are introduced speaking only according to nature. Farther, there ought to be a difference of style observed in the speeches of human persons, and those of deities; and again, in those

which may be called set harangues, or orations, and those which are only conversation or dialogue. Homer has more of the latter than any other poet: what Virgil does by two or three words of narration, Homer still performs by speeches: not only replies, but even rejoinders are frequent in him; a practice almost unknown to Virgil. This renders his poems more animated; but less grave and majestic: and consequently necessitates the frequent use of a lower style. The writers of tragedy lie under the same necessity, if they would copy nature: whereas that painted and poetical diction which they perpetually use, would be improper even in orations designed to move with all the arts of rhetoric. This is plain from the practice of Demosthenes and Cicero; and Virgil in those of Drances and Turnus gives an eminent example, how far removed the style of them ought to be from such an excess of figures and ornaments: which indeed fits only that language of the gods we have been speaking of, or that of a muse under inspiration.

To read through a whole work in this strain, is like travelling all along on the ridge of a hill; which is not half so agreeable as sometimes gradually to rise, and sometimes gently to descend, as the way leads, and as the end of the journey directs. •

Indeed the true reason that so few poets have imitated Homer in these lower parts, has been the extreme difficulty of preserving that mixture of ease and dignity essential to them. For it is as hard for an epic poem to stoop to the narrative with success, as for a prince to

descend to be familiar, without diminution to his greatness.

The sublime style is more easily counterfeited than the natural; something that passes for it, or sounds like it, is common in all false writers: but nature, purity, perspicuity, and simplicity, never walk in the clouds: they are obvious to all capacities; and where they are not evident, they do not exist.

The most plain narration not only admits of these, and of harmony (which are all the qualities of style), but it requires every one of them to render it pleasing. On the contrary, whatever pretends to a share of the sublime, may pass, notwithstanding any defects in the rest; nay, sometimes without any of them, and gain the admiration of all ordinary readers.

Homer, in his lowest narrations or speeches, is ever easy, flowing, copious, clear, and harmonious. He shows no less invention, in assembling the humbler than the greater thoughts and images; nor less judgment, in proportioning the style and the versification to these, than to the other. "Let it be remembered, that the same genius that soared the highest, and from whom the greatest models of the sublime are derive was also he who stooped the lowest, and gave to the simple narrative its utmost perfection. Which of these was the harder task to Homer himself, I cannot pretend to determine; but to his translator I can affirm (however unequal all his imitations must be) that of the latter has been much more difficult.

Whoever expects here the same pomp of verse, and

the same ornaments of diction, as in the *Iliad*, will, and ought to be disappointed. Were the original otherwise, it had been an offence against nature: and were the translation so, it were an offence against Homer; which is the same thing.

It must be allowed that there is a majesty and harmony in the Greek language which greatly contribute to elevate and support the narration. But I must also observe that this is an advantage grown upon the language since Homer's time: for things are removed from vulgarity by being out of use; and if the words we could find in any present language were equally sonorous or musical in themselves, they would still appear less poetical and uncommon than those of a dead one, from this only circumstance, of being in every man's mouth. I may add to this another disadvantage to a translator, from a different cause: Homer seems to have taken upon him the character of an historian, antiquary, divine, and professor of arts and sciences, as well as a poet. In one or other of these characters he descends into many particularities, which as a poet only perhaps he would have avoided. All these ought to be preserved by a faithful translator; who in some measure takes the place of Homer: and all that can be expected from him is to make them as poetical as the subject will bear. Many arts therefore are requisite to supply these disadvantages; in order to dignify and solemnize these plainer parts, which hardly admit of any poetical ornaments.

Some use has been made to this end of the style of

Milton. A just and moderate mixture of old words may have an effect like the working old abbey stones into a building; which I have sometimes seen to give a kind of venerable air, and yet not destroy the neatness, elegance, and equality requisite to a new work. I mean without rendering it too unfamiliar, or remote from the present purity of writing, or from that ease and smoothness which ought always to accompany narration or dialogue. In reading a style judiciously antiquated, one finds a pleasure not unlike that of travelling on an old Roman way: but then the road must be as good as the way is ancient; the style must be such in which we may evenly proceed, without being put to short stops by sudden abruptnesses, or puzzled by frequent turnings and transpositions. No man delights in furrows and stumbling-blocks: and let our love to antiquity be ever so great, a fine ruin is one thing, and a heap of rubbish another. The imitators of Milton, like most other imitators, are not copies but caricaturas of their original; they are a hundred times more obsolete and cramp than he, and equally so in all places: whereas it should have been observed of Milton, that he is not lavish of his exotic words and phrases every where alike; but employs them much more where the subject is marvellous, vast, and strange; as in the scenes of heaven, hell, chaos, &c. than where it is turned to the natural and agreeable, as in the pictures of paradise, the loves of our first parents, the entertainments of angels, and the like. In general, this unusual style better serves to awaken our ideas in the

descriptions and in the imaging and picturesque parts, than it agrees with the lower sort of narrations, the character of which is simplicity and purity. Milton has several of the latter, where we find not an antiquated, affected, or uncouth word, for some hundred lines together; as in his fifth book, the latter part of the eighth, the former of the tenth and eleventh books, and in the narration of Michael in the twelfth. I wonder indeed that he, who ventured (contrary to the practice of all other epic poets) to imitate Homer's lowness in the narrative, should not also have copied his plainness and perspicuity in the dramatic parts: since in his speeches (where clearness above all is necessary) there is frequently such transposition and forced construction, that the very sense is not to be discovered without a second or third reading: and in this certainly he ought to be no example.

To preserve the true character of Homer's style in the present translation, great pains have been taken to be easy and natural. The chief merit I can pretend to is, not to have been carried into a more plausible and figurative manner of writing, which would better have pleased all readers, but the judicious ones. My errors had been fewer, had each of those gentlemen who joined with me shown as much of the severity of a friend to me, as I did to them, in a strict animadversion and correction. What assistance I received from them, was made known in general to the public in the original proposals for this work, and the particulars are specified at the conclusion of it; to which I must add

(to be punctually just), some part of the tenth and fifteenth books. The reader will now be too good a judge, how much the greater part of it, and consequently of its faults, is chargeable upon me alone. But this I can with integrity affirm, that I have bestowed as much time and pains upon the whole, as were consistent with the indispensable duties and cares of life, and with that wretched state of health which God has been pleased to make my portion. At the least, it is a pleasure to me to reflect, that I have introduced into our language this other work of the greatest and most ancient of poets, with some dignity; and I hope, with as little disadvantage as the *Iliad*. And if, after the unmerited success of that translation, any one will wonder why I would enterprize the *Odyssey*, I think it sufficient to say, that Homer himself did the same; or the world would never have seen it.

I designed to have ended this postscript here; but since I am now taking my leave of Homer, and of all controversy relating to him, I beg leave to be indulged if I make use of this last opportunity, to say a very few words about some reflections which the late Madam Dacier bestowed on the first part of my preface to the *Iliad*, and which she published at the end of her translation of that poem.

To write gravely an answer to them would be too much for the reflections; and to say nothing concerning them, would be too little for the author. It is owing to the industry of that learned lady, that our polite neighbours are become acquainted with many of Ho-

mer's beauties, which were hidden from them before in Greek and in Eustathius. She challenges on this account a particular regard from all the admirers of that great poet: and I hope that I shall be thought, as I mean, to pay some part of this debt to her memory in what I am now writing.

Had these reflections fallen from the pen of an ordinary critic, I should not have apprehended their effect; and should therefore have been silent concerning them: but since they are Madam Dacier's, I imagine that they must be of weight; and in a case where I think her reasoning very bad, I respect her authority.

I have fought under Madam Dacier's banner; and have waged war in defence of the divine Homer against all the heretics of the age. And yet it is Madam Dacier who accuses me; and who accuses me of nothing less than betraying our common cause. She affirms that the most declared enemies of this author have never said any thing against him more injurious or more unjust than I. What must the world think of me, after such a judgment passed by so great a critic: the world, who decides so often and who examines so seldom; the world, who even in matters of literature is almost always the slave of authority? Who will suspect that so much learning should mistake, that so much accuracy should be misled, or that so much candour should be biassed?

All this however has happened: and Madam Dacier's criticisms on my preface flow from the very same

error, from which so many false criticisms of her countrymen upon Homer have flowed, and which she has so justly and so severely reprov'd; I mean the error of depending on injurious and unskilful translations.

An indifferent translation may be of some use; and a good one will be of a great deal. But I think that no translation ought to be the ground of criticism; because no man ought to be condemned upon another man's explanation of his meaning. Could Homer have had the honour of explaining his, before that august tribunal where Monsieur de la Motte presides, I make no doubt but he had escaped many of those severe animadversions with which some French authors have loaded him; and from which even Madam Dacier's translation of the *Iliad* could not preserve him.

How unhappy was it for me, that the knowledge of our island-tongue was as necessary to Madam Dacier in my case, as the knowledge of Greek was to Monsieur de la Motte in that of our great author: or to any of those whom she styles 'blind censurers,' and blames for condemning what they did not understand.

I may say with modesty, that she knew less of my true sense from that faulty translation of part of my preface, than those blind censurers might have known of Homer's even from the translation of la Valterie, which preceded her own.

It pleas'd me however to find, that her objections were not levelled at the general doctrine, or at any essentials of my preface; but only at a few particular expressions. She propos'd little more than (to use her

own phrase) 'to combat two or three similes;' and I hope that to combat a simile is no more than to fight with a shadow, since a simile is no better than the shadow of an argument.

She lays much weight where I laid but little; and examines with more scrupulosity than I writ, or than perhaps the matter requires.

These unlucky similes taken by themselves may perhaps render my meaning equivocal to an ignorant translator; or there may have fallen from my pen some expressions, which, taken by themselves likewise, may to the same person have the same effect. But if the translator had been master of our tongue, the general tenour of my argument, that which precedes and that which follows the passages objected to, would have sufficiently determined him as to the precise meaning of them: and if Madam Dacier had taken up her pen a little more leisurely, or had employed it with more temper, she would not have answered paraphrases of her own, which even the translation will not justify, and which say, more than once, the very contrary to what I have said in the passages themselves.

If any person has curiosity enough to read the whole paragraphs in my preface, or some mangled parts of which these reflections are made, he will easily discern that I am as orthodox as Madam Dacier herself in those very articles on which she treats me like an heretic: he will easily see that all the difference between us consists in this, that I offer opinions, and she delivers doctrines; that my imagination represents Ho-

mer as the greatest of human poets, whereas in hers he was exalted above humanity; infallibility and impeccability were two of his attributes. There was therefore no need of defending Homer against me: who (if I mistake not) had carried my admiration of him, as far as it can be carried, without giving a real occasion of writing in his defence.

After answering my harmless similes, she proceeds to a matter which does not regard so much the honour of Homer, as that of the times he lived in: and here I must confess she does not wholly mistake my meaning; but I think she mistakes the state of the question. She had said, the manners of those times were so much the better, the less they were like ours. I thought this required a little qualification. I confess that in my opinion the world was mended in some points: such as the custom of putting whole nations to the sword, condemning kings and their families to perpetual slavery, and a few others. Madam Dacier judges otherwise in this: but as to the rest, particularly in preferring the simplicity of the ancient world to the luxury of ours, which is the main point contended for, she owns we agree. This I thought was well: but I am so unfortunate that this too is taken amiss, and called adopting, or (if you will) stealing her sentiment. The truth is, she might have said, her words; for I used them on purpose; being then professedly citing from her: though I might have done the same without intending that compliment; for they are also to be found in Eustathius; and the sentiment I believe is that of

all mankind. I cannot really tell what to say to this whole remark; only that in the first part of it, Madam Dacier is displeased that I do not agree with her, and in the last that I do: but this is a temper which every polite man should overlook in a lady.

To punish my ingratitude, she resolves to expose my blunders: and selects two which I suppose are the most flagrant, out of the many for which she could have chastised me. It happens that the first of these is in part the translator's, and in part her own, without any share of mine: she quotes the end of a sentence, and he puts in French what I never wrote in English: 'Homer (I said) opened a new and boundless walk for his imagination, and created a world for himself in the invention of fable;' which he translates, '*Homere créa pour son usage un monde mouvant, en inventant la fable.*'

Madam Dacier justly wonders at this nonsense in me; and I, in the translator. As to what I meant by Homer's invention of fable, it is afterwards particularly distinguished from that extensive sense in which she took it, by these words: 'If Homer was not the first, who introduced the deities (as Herodotus imagines) into the religion of Greece, he seems the first who brought them into a system of machinery for poetry.'

The other blunder she accuses me of is, the mistaking a passage in Aristotle: and she is pleased to send me back to this philosopher's Treatise of Poetry, and to her Preface on the Odyssey, for my better instruction. Now though I am saucy enough to think

that one may sometimes differ from Aristotle without blundering, and though I am sure one may sometimes fall into an error by following him servilely; yet I own, that to quote any author for what he never said is a blunder: (but by the way, to correct an author for what he never said, is somewhat worse than a blunder.)

My words were these; 'As there is a greater variety of characters in the Iliad than in any other poem, so there is of speeches. Every thing in it has manners, as Aristotle expresses it; that is, every thing is acted or spoken: very little passes in narration.' She justly says, that 'Every thing which is acted or spoken, has not necessarily manners merely because it is acted or spoken.' Agreed: but I would ask the question, whether any thing can have manners which is neither acted nor spoken? If not, then the whole Iliad being almost spent in speech and action, almost every thing in it has manners, since Homer has been proved before, in a long paragraph of the preface, to have excelled in drawing characters and painting manners: and indeed his whole poem is one continued occasion of shewing this bright part of his talent.

To speak fairly, it is impossible she could read even the translation, and take my sense so wrong as she represents it; but I was first translated ignorantly, and then read partially. My expression indeed was not quite exact; it should have been, 'Every thing has manners, as Aristotle calls them.' But such a fault methinks might have been spared: since if one was to look with that disposition she discovers towards me, even on her own excellent writings, one might find

some mistakes which no context can redress; as where she makes Eustathius call Cratisthenes the Phliasian, Callisthenes the Physician.* What a triumph might some slips of this sort have afforded to Homer's, hers, and my enemies: from which she was only screened by their happy ignorance? How unlucky had it been, when she insulted Mr de la Motte for omitting a material passage in the speech † of Helen to Hector, Iliad vi. if some champion for the moderns had by chance understood so much Greek, as to whisper him, that there was no such passage in Homer?

Our concern, zeal, and even jealousy, for our great author's honour were mutual; our endeavours to advance it were equal: and I have as often trembled for it in her hands, as she could in mine. It was one of the many reasons I had to wish the longer life of this lady, that I must certainly have regained her good opinion, in spite of all misrepresenting translators whatever. I could not have expected it on any other terms than being approved as great, if not as passionate, an admirer of Homer as herself. For that was the first condition of her favour and friendship: otherwise not one's taste alone, but one's morality had been corrupted; nor would any man's religion have been unsuspected, who did not implicitly believe in an author whose doctrine is so conformable to holy Scripture. However, as different people have different ways of expressing their belief, some purely by public and

* Dacier, Remarques sur le 4^{me} livre de l'Odyss. p. 467.

† De la Corruption du Gout.

general acts of worship, others by a reverend sort of reasoning and inquiry about the grounds of it, it is the same in admiration; some prove it by exclamations, others by respect. I have observed that the loudest huzzas given to a great man in a triumph, proceed not from his friends, but the rabble; and as I have fancied it the same with the rabble of critics, a desire to be distinguished from them has turned me to the more moderate, and, I hope, more rational method. Though I am a poet, I would not be an enthusiast; and though I am an Englishman, I would not be furiously of a party. I am far from thinking myself that genius, upon whom, at the end of these remarks, Madam Dacier congratulates my country: one capable of correcting Homer, and consequently of reforming mankind, and amending this constitution. It was not to Great Britain this ought to have been applied: since our nation has one happiness for which she might have preferred it to her own, that as much as we abound in other miserable misguided sects, we have at least none of the blasphemers of Homer. We stedfastly and unanimously believe, both his poem, and our constitution, to be the best that ever human wit invented: that the one is not more incapable of amendment than the other; and (old as they both are) we despise any French or Englishman whatever, who shall presume to retrench, to innovate, or to make the least alteration in either. Far therefore from the genius for which Madam Dacier mistook me, my whole desire is but to preserve the humble character of a faithful translator, and

HOMER'S BATTLE

OF THE

FROGS AND MICE.

BY

MR. ARCHDEACON PARNELL.

CORRECTED BY

MR. POPE.

NAMES OF THE MICE.

Psycarpax, one who plunders granaries.

Troxartes, a bread-eater.

Lychomyle, a lick of meal.

Pternothoctas, a bacon-eater.

Lycopinax, a lick of dishes.

Embasichytros, a creeper into pots.

Lychenor, a name from licking.

Troglodytes, one who runs into holes.

Artophagus, who feeds on bread.

Tyroglyphus, a cheese-scooper.

Pternophagus, a bacon-eater.

Cnissodiocles, one who follows the steam of kitchens.

Sitophagus, an eater of wheat.

Meridarpax, one who plunders his share.

NAMES OF THE FROGS.

Physignathus, one who swells his cheeks.

Peleus, a name from mud.

Hydromeduse, a ruler in the waters.

Hypsiboas, a loud bawler.

Pelion, from mud.

Seutlæus, called from the beets.

Polyphonus, a great babbler.

Lymnocharis, one who loves the lake.

Crambophagus, cabbage-eater.

Lymnisius, called from the lake.

Calaminthius, from the herb.

Hydrocharis, who loves the water.

Borborocates, who lies in the mud.

Prassophagus, an eater of garlic.

Pelusius, from mud.

Pelobates, who walks in the dirt.

Prassæus, called from garlic.

Craugasides, from croaking.

BOOK I.

To fill my rising song with sacred fire,
Ye tuneful nine, ye sweet celestial quire!
From Helicon's imbow'ring height repair,
Attend my labours, and reward my pray'r.
The dreadful toils of raging Mars I write, 5
The springs of contest, and the fields of fight;
How threat'ning mice advanc'd with warlike grace,
And wag'd dire combats with the croaking race.
Not louder tumults shook Olympus' tow'rs,
When earth-born giants dar'd immortal pow'rs.
These equal acts an equal glory claim, 14
And thus the muse records the tale of fame.

Once on a time, fatigu'd and out of breath,
And just escap'd the stretching claws of death,
A gentle mouse, whom cats pursu'd in vain, 15
Flies swift-of-foot across the neighb'ring plain,
Hangs o'er a brink, his eager thirst to cool,
And dips his whiskers in the standing pool;
When near a courteous frog advanc'd his head,
And from the waters, hoarse-resounding, said: 20

What art thou, stranger? What the line you
boast?

What chance hath cast thee panting on our coast?
With strictest truth let all thy words agree,
Nor let me find a faithless mouse in thee.

If worthy friendship, proffer'd friendship take, 25
And ent'ring view the pleasurable lake:
Range o'er my palace, in my bounty share,
And glad return from hospitable fare.

This silver realm extends beneath my sway,
And me, their monarch, all its frogs obey. 30

Great Physignathus I, from Pelius' race,
Begot in fair Hydromeduse' embrace,
Where by the nuptial bank that paints his side,
The swift Eridanus delights to glide.

Thee too, thy form, thy strength, and port pro-
claim, 35

A sceptred king; a son of martial fame:
Then trace thy line, and aid my guessing eyes.
Thus ceas'd the frog, and thus the mouse replies:

Known to the gods, the men, the birds that fly,
Through wild expanses of the midway sky, 40
My name resounds; and if unknown to thee,
The soul of great Psycarpax lives in me,

Of brave Troxartes' line, whose sleeky down
 In love compress'd Lycomile the brown.
 My mother she, and princess of the plains 45
 Where'er her father Pternotroctas reigns:
 Born where a cabin lifts its airy shed,
 With figs, with nuts, with varied dainties fed.
 But since our natures nought in common know,
 From what foundation can a friendship grow? 50
 These curling waters o'er thy palace roll;
 But man's high food supports my princely soul.
 In vain the circled loaves attempt to lie
 Conceal'd in flaskets from my curious eye;
 In vain the tripe that boasts the whitest hue, 55
 In vain the gilded bacon shuns my view,
 In vain the cheeses, offspring of the pail,
 Or honied cakes, which gods themselves regale.
 And as in arts I shine, in arms I fight,
 Mix'd with the bravest, and unknown to flight. 60
 Though large to mine the human form appear,
 Not man himself can smite my soul with fear:
 Sly to the bed with silent steps I go,
 Attempt his finger, or attack his toe,
 And fix indented wounds with dext'rous skill; 65
 Sleeping he feels, and only seems to feel.

Yet have we foes which direful dangers cause,
 Grim owls with talons arm'd, and cats with claws;
 And that false trap, the den of silent fate,
 Where death his ambush plants around the bait:
 All dreaded these, and dreadful o'er the rest 71
 The potent warriors of the tabby vest;
 If to the dark we fly, the dark they trace,
 And rend our heroes of the nibbling race.
 But me, nor stalks, nor wat'rish herbs delight, 75
 Nor can the crimson raddish charm my sight;
 The lake-resounding frogs' selected fare,
 Which not a mouse of any taste can bear.

As thus the downy prince his mind express'd,
 His answer thus the croaking king address'd: 80
 Thy words luxuriant on thy dainties rove,
 And, stranger, we can boast of bounteous Jove:
 We sport in water, or we dance on land,
 And born amphibious, food from both command.
 But trust thyself where wonders ask thy view, 85
 And safely tempt those seas, I'll bear thee through:
 Ascend my shoulders, firmly keep thy seat,
 And reach my marshy court, and feast in state.

He said, and lean'd his back; with nimble bound
 Leaps the light mouse, and clasps his arms around,

Then wond'ring floats, and sees with glad survey
 The winding banks resembling ports at sea.
 But when aloft the curling water-rides,
 And wets with azure wave his downy sides, 94
 His thoughts grow conscious of approaching woe,
 His idle tears with vain repentance flow ;
 His locks he rends, his trembling feet he rears,
 Thick beats his heart with unaccustom'd fears ;
 He sighs, and chill'd with danger, longs for shore :
 His tail extended forms a fruitless oar : 100
 Half drench'd in liquid death his pray'rs he spake,
 And thus bemoan'd him from the dreadful lake ;

So pass'd Europa through the rapid sea,
 Trembling and fainting all the vent'rous way ;
 With oary feet the bull triumphant row'd, 105
 And safe in Crete depos'd his lovely load.
 Ah safe at last ! may thus the frog support
 My trembling limbs to reach his ample court.

As thus he sorrows, death ambiguous grows,
 Lo ! from the deep a water-hydra rose ; 110
 He rolls his sanguin'd eyes, his bosom heaves ;
 And darts with active rage along the waves.
 Confus'd, the monarch sees his hissing foe,
 And dives to shun the sable fates below.

Forgetful frog! the friend thy shoulders bore, 115
 Unskill'd in swimming, floats remote from shore.
 He grasps with fruitless hands to find relief,
 Supinely falls, and grinds his teeth with grief;
 Plunging he sinks, and struggling mounts again,
 And sinks, and strives, but strives with fate in vain.
 The weighty moisture clogs his hairy vest, 121
 And thus the prince his dying rage exprest:

Nor thou, that fling'st me flound'ring from thy
 back,

As from hard rocks rebounds the shatt'ring wrack,
 Nor thou shalt 'scape thy due, perfidious king!
 Pursu'd by vengeance on the swiftest wing: 126
 At land thy strength could never equal mine,
 At sea to conquer, and by craft, was thine.
 But heav'n has gods, and gods have searching eyes:
 Ye mice, ye mice, my great avengers, rise! 130

This said, he sighing gasp'd, and gasping died;
 His death the young Lycopinax espied,
 As on the flow'ry brink he pass'd the day,
 Bask'd in the beam, and loiter'd life away:
 Loud shrieks the mouse, his shrieks the shores re-
 peat; 135

The nibbling nation learn their hero's fate:

Grief, dismal grief ensues; deep murmurs sound,
 And shriller fury fills the deafen'd ground:
 From lodge to lodge the sacred heralds run,
 To fix their council with the rising sun; 140
 Where great Troxartes crown'd in glory reigns,
 And winds his length'ning court beneath the plains:
 Psycarpax' father, father now no more!
 For poor Psycarpax lies remote from shore:
 Supine he lies! the silent waters stand, 145
 And no kind billow wafts the dead to land!

BOOK II.

WHEN rosy-finger'd morn had ting'd the clouds,
 Around their monarch-mouse the nation cròwds;
 Slow rose the monarch, heav'd his anxious breast,
 And thus, the council fill'd with rage, addrest:

For lost Psycarpax much my soul endures, 5
 'Tis mine the private grief, the public, yours;
 Threë warlike sons adorn'd my nuptiâl bed,
 Three sons, alas, before their father dead!
 Our eldest perish'd by the rav'ning-cat,
 As near my court the prince unheedful sat. 10

Our next, an engine fraught with danger drew,
 The portal gap'd, the bait was hung in view,
 Dire arts assist the-trap, the fates decoy,
 And men unpitying kill'd my gallant boy.
 The last, his country's hope, his parents' pride, 15
 Plung'd in the lake by Physignathus, died.
 Rouse all the war, my friends! avenge the deed,
 And bleed that monarch, and his nation bleed.
 His words in ev'ry breast inspir'd alarms, 19
 And careful Mars supplied their host with arms.
 In verdant hulls despoil'd of all their beams,
 The buskin'd warriors stalk'd along the plains:
 Quills aptly bound, their bracing cors'let made,
 Fac'd with the plunder of a cat they flay'd; 24
 The lamp's round boss affords their ample shield,
 Large shells of nuts their cov'ring helmet yield;
 And o'er the region, with reflected rays,
 Tall groves of needles for their lances blaze.
 Dreadful in arms the marching mice appear:
 The wond'ring frogs perceive the tumult near, 30
 Forsake the waters, thick'ning form a ring,
 And ask, and hearken, whence the noises spring;
 When near the crowd, disclos'd to public view,
 The valiant chief Embasichytros drew:

The sacred herald's sceptre grac'd his hand, 35

And thus his words express'd his king's command:

Ye frogs! the mice, with vengeance fir'd, ad-
vance,

And deck'd in armour shake the shining lance;

Their hapless prince by Physignathus slain,

Extends incumbent on the wat'ry plain. 40

Then arm your host, the doubtful battle try;

Lead forth those frogs that have the soul to die:

The chief retires, the crowd the challenge hear,

And proudly swelling, yet perplex'd appear;

Much they resent, yet much their monarch blame,

Who rising, spoke to clear his tainted fame: 46

O friends! I never forc'd the mouse to death,
Nor saw the gaspings of his latest breath.

He, vain of youth, our art of swimming tried,

And vent'rous in the lake the wanton died. 50

To vengeance now by false appearance led,

They point their anger at my guiltless head.

But wage the rising war by deep device,

And turn its fury on the crafty mice.

Your king directs the way; my thoughts elate 55

With hopes of conquest, form designs of fate.

Where high the banks their verdant surface heave,

And the steep sides confine the sleeping wave,

There, near the margin, and in armour bright,
 Sustain the first impetuous shocks of fight: 60
 Then where the dancing feather joins the crest,
 Let each brave frog his obvious mouse arrest;
 Each strongly grasping, headlong plunge a foe,
 Till countless circles whirl the lake below; 64
 Down sink the mice in yielding waters drown'd;
 Loud flash the waters; echoing shores resound:
 The frogs triumphant tread the conquer'd plain,
 And raise their glorious trophies of the slain.

He spake no more; his prudent scheme imparts
 Redoubling ardour to the boldest hearts. 70

Green was the suit his arming heroes chose,
 Around their legs the greaves of mallows close;
 Green were the beets about their shoulders laid,
 And green the colewort, which the target made;
 Form'd of the varied shells the waters yield, 75
 Their glossy helmets glisten'd o'er the field;
 And tap'ring sea-reeds for the polish'd spear,
 With upright order pierc'd the ambient air.
 Thus dress'd for war, they take th'appointed height,
 Poise the long arms, and urge the promis'd fight.

But now, where Jove's irradiate spires arise, 81
 With stars surrounded in ethereal skies,

(A solemn council call'd) the brazen gates
 Unbar; the gods assume their golden seats:
 The sire superior leans, and points to show 85
 What wond'rous combats mortals wage below;
 How strong, how large, the num'rous heroes stride;
 What length of lance they shake with warlike pride;
 What eager fire their rapid march reveals;
 So the fierce Centaurs ravag'd, o'er the dales; 90
 And so confirm'd, the daring Titans rose,
 Heap'd hills on hills, and bid the gods be foes.

This seen, the pow'r his sacred visage rears,
 He casts a pitying smile on worldly cares,
 And asks what heav'nly guardians take the list,
 Or who the mice, or who the frogs assist?

Then thus to Pallas: If my daughter's mind
 Have join'd the mice, why stays she still behind?
 Drawn forth by sav'ry steams they wind their way,
 And sure attendance round thine altar pay, 100
 Where while the victims gratify their taste,
 They sport to please the goddess of the feast.

Thus spake the ruler of the spacious skies;
 When thus, resolv'd, the blue-ey'd maid replies:
 In vain, my father! all their dangers plead; 105
 To such, thy Pallas never grants her aid.

My flow'ry wreaths they petulantly spoil,
 And rob my crystal lamps of feeding oil:
 (Ills following ill) but what afflicts me more,
 My veil, that idle race profanely tore. 110
 The web was curious, wrought with art divine;
 Relentless wretches! all the work was mine:
 Along the loom the purple warp I spread,
 Cast the light shoot, and cross'd the silver thread,
 In this their teeth a thousand breaches tear; 115
 The thousand breaches skilful hands repair;
 For which, vile earthly duns thy daughter grieve;
 But gods, that use no coin, have none to give;
 And learning's goddess never less can owe:
 Neglected learning gets no wealth below. 120
 Nor let the frogs to gain my succour sue,
 Those clam'rous fools have lost my favour too.
 For late, when all the conflict ceas'd at night,
 When my stretch'd sinews ached with eager fight,
 When spent with glorious toil, I left the field, 125
 And sunk for slumber on my swelling shield;
 Lo from the deep, repelling sweet repose,
 With noisy croakings half the nation rose:
 Devoid of rest, with aching brows I lay, 129
 Till cocks proclaim'd the crimson dawn of day.

Let all, like me, from either host forbear,
 Nor tempt the flying furies of the spear.
 Let heav'nly blood (or what for blood may flow)
 Adorn the conquest of a meaner foe, 134
 Who, wildly rushing, meet the wond'rous odds,
 Tho' gods oppose; and brave the wounded gods.
 O'er gilded clouds reclin'd, the danger view,
 And be the wars of mortal scenes for you.

So mov'd the blue-ey'd queen; her words per-
 suade;

Great Jove assented, and the rest obey'd. 140

BOOK III.

Now front to front the marching armies shine,
 Halt ere they meet, and form the length'ning line;
 The chiefs conspicuous seen, and heard afar,
 Give the loud sign to loose the rushing war;
 Their dreadful trumpets deep-mouth'd horns
 sound, 5

The sounded charge remurmurs o'er the ground;
 E'en Jove proclaims a field of horror nigh,
 And rolls low thunder through the troubled sky.

First to the fight the large Hypsiboas flew,
 And brave Lychenor with a jav'lin slew: 10
 The luckless warrior, fill'd with gen'rous flame,
 Stood foremost, glitt'ring in the post of fame.
 When in his liver struck, the jav'lin hung;
 The mouse fell thund'ring, and the target rung;
 Prone to the ground he sinks his closing eye, 15
 And, soil'd in dust, his lovely tresses lie.

A spear at Pelion Troglodytes cast;
 The missive spear within the bosom past;
 Death's sable shades the fainting frog surround,
 And life's red tide runs ebbing from the wound. 20
 Embasichytos felt Seutlaeus' dart
 Transfix and quiver in his panting heart;
 But great Artophagus aveng'd the slain,
 And big Seutlaeus tumbling loads the plain:
 And Polyphonus dies, a frog renown'd 25
 For boastful speech and turbulence of sound;
 Deep through the belly pierc'd, supine he lay,
 And breath'd his soul against the face of day.

The strong Lymnocharis, who view'd with ire
 A victor triumph, and a friend expire, 30
 With heaving arms a rocky fragment caught,
 And fiercely flung where Troglodytes fought;

A warrior vers'd in arts, of sure retreat,
 Yet arts in vain elude impending fate;
 Full on his sinewy neck the fragment fell, 35
 And o'er his eyelids clouds eternal dwell.

Lychenor (second of the glorious name)
 Striding advanc'd, and took no wand'ring aim;
 Through all the frog the shining jav'lin flies,
 And near the vanquish'd mouse the victor dies. 40

The dreadful stroke Crambophagus affrights,
 Long bred to banquets, less inur'd to fights;
 Heedless he runs, and stumbles o'er the steep,
 And wildly flound'ring flashes up the deep:
 Lychenor, following, with a downward blow 45
 Reach'd, in the lake, his unrecover'd foe;
 Gasping he rolls, a purple stream of blood
 Distains the surface of the silver flood;
 Thro' the wide wound the rushing entrails throng,
 And slow the breathless carcase floats along. 50

Lymnisius good Tyroglyphus assails,
 Prince of the mice that haunt the flow'ry vales,
 Lost to the milky fares and rural seat,
 He came, to perish on the bank of fate.
 The dread Pternoglyphus demands the fight, 55
 Which tender Calaminthus shuns by flight,

Drops the green target, springing quits the foe,
 Glides through the lake, and safely dives below.
 The dire Pternophagus divides his way
 Thro' breaking ranks, and leads the dreadful day;
 No nibbling prince excell'd in fierceness more, 61
 His parents fed him on the savage boar:
 But where his lance the field with blood imbru'd,
 Swift as he mov'd Hydrocharis pursu'd,
 Till fall'n in death he lies; a shatt'ring stone 65
 Splits on the neck, and crushes all the bone;
 His blood pollutes the verdure of the plain,
 And from his nostrils bursts the gushing brain.

Lycopinax with Borb'rocates fights,
 A blindest frog, whom humbler life delights; 70
 The fatal jav'lin unrelenting flies,
 And darkness seals the gentle croaker's eyes.

Incens'd Prassophagus, with sprightly bound,
 Bears Cnissodictes off the rising ground; 74
 Then drags him o'er the lake, depriv'd of breath;
 And, downward plunging, sinks his soul to death.
 But now the great Psycarpax shines far,
 (Scarce he so great whose loss provok'd the war)
 Swift to revenge his fatal jav'lin fled,
 And through the liver struck Pelusius dead; 80

His freckled corpse before the victor fell,
His soul indignant sought the shades of hell.

This saw Pelobates, and from the flood
Lifts with both hands a monstrous mass of mud.
The cloud obscene o'er all the warrior flies, 85
~~Dishonours~~ his brown face, and blots his eyes.
Enrag'd, and wildly sputt'ring, from the shore
A stone immense of size the warrior bore;
A load for lab'ring earth, whose bulk to raise,
Asks ten degen'rate mice of modern days: 90
Full to the leg arrives the crushing wound;
The frog, supportless, writhes upon the ground.
Thus flush'd, the victor wars with matchless force,
Till loud Craugasides arrests his course:
Hoarse croaking threats precede; with fatal speed
Deep through the belly runs the pointed reed, 96
Then, strongly tugg'd, return'd imbru'd with gore,
And on the pile his reeking entrails bore.

The lame Sitophagus, oppress'd with pain,
Creeps from the desperate dangers of the plain;
And where the ditches rising weeds supply 101
To spread their lowly shades beneath the sky,
There lurks the silent mouse, reliev'd of heat,
And, safely imbow'r'd, avoids the chance of fate.

But here Troxartes, Physignathus there, 105
 Whirl the dire furies of the pointed spear:
 Then where the foot around its ancle plies,
 Troxartes wounds, and Physignathus flies,
 Halts to the pool, a safe retreat to find,
 And trails a dangling length of leg behind. 110
 The mouse still urges, still the frog retires,
 And half in anguish of the flight expires;
 Then pious ardour young Prassæus brings,
 Betwixt the fortune of contending kings:
 Lank, harmless frog! with forces hardly grown,
 He darts the reed in combats not his own: 116
 Which faintly tinkling on Troxartes' shield,
 Hangs at the point, and drops upon the field.
 Now, nobly tow'ring o'er the rest, appears
 A gallant prince that transcends his years, 120
 Pride of his sire, and glory of his house,
 And more a Mars in combat than a mouse:
 His action bold, robust his ample frame,
 And Meridarpax his resounding name.
 The warrior, singled from the fighting crowd, 125
 Boasts the dire honours of his arms aloud;
 Then strutting near the lake, with looks elate,
 Threats all its nations with approaching fate.

And such his strength, the silver lakes around,
 Might roll their waters o'er unpeopled ground. 130
 But pow'rful Jove, who shews no less his grace
 To frogs that perish, than to human race,
 Felt soft compassion rising in his soul,
 And took his sacred head, that shook the pole.

Then thus to all the gazing pow'rs began 135
 The sire of gods, and frogs, and mouse, and man:

What seas of blood I view, what worlds of slain!
 An Iliad rising from a day's campaign!
 How fierce his jav'lin, o'er the trembling lake,
 The black-furr'd hero, Meridarpax, shakes! 140
 Unless some fav'ring deity descend,
 Soon will the frogs' loquacious empire end.
 Let dreadful Pallas, wing'd with pity, fly,
 And make her ægis blaze before his eye:
 While Mars, refulgent on his rattling car, 145
 Arrests his raging rival of the war.

He ceas'd, reclining with attentive head;
 When thus the garrulous go of combats said:
 Nor Pallas Jove! though Pallas take the field,
 With all the terrors of her hissing shield; 150
 Nor Mars himself, though Mars in armour bright
 Ascend his car, and wheel amidst the fight;



Not these can drive the desp'rate mouse afar,
 And change the fortunes of the bleeding war.
 Let all go forth, all heav'n in arms arise; 155
 Or launch thy own red thunder from the skies:
 Such ardent bolts as flew that wond'rous day
 When heaps of Titans mix'd with mountains
 When all the giant-race enormous fell,
 And huge Enceladus was hurl'd to hell. 160

'Twas thus th' omnipotent advis'd the gods;
 When from his throne the cloud-compeller nods:
 Deep-length'ning thunders run from pole to pole,
 Olympus trembles as the thunders roll.

Then swift he whirls the brandish'd bolt around,
 And hurls it at the distant ground; 166
 The bolt, discharg'd, inwrapt with lightning flies,
 And rends its flaming passage through the skies:
 Then earth's inhabitants, the bblers, shake;
 And frogs, the dwellers in the waters, quake; 170
 Yet still the mice advance their dread design,
 And the last danger threatens the croaking line;
 Till Jove, that inly mourn'd the loss they bore,
 With strange assistance fill'd the frightened shore.

Pew'd from the neighbouring strand, deform'd
 to view; 175

They mark'd a sadder or expected crew!

Strong suits of armour round their bodies close,
 Which like thick anvils blunt the force of blows;
 In wheeling marches turn'd, oblique they go;
 With harpy claws their limbs divide below; 180
 Fell sheers the passage to their mouth command;
~~From~~ the flesh the bones by nature stand:
 Broad spread their backs, their shining shoulders
 rise;

Unnumber'd joints distort their lengthen'd thighs;
 With nervous cords their hands are firmly bind'd;
 Their round black eye-balls in their bosoms plac'd;
 On eight long feet the wond'rous warriors tread,
 And either end alike supplies a head:
 These to call crabs, mere mortals agree,
 But gods have other names for things than we.
 Now, ~~where the jointures~~ from their loins de-
 pend,

The heroes' tails with sev'ring grasps they rend.
 Here, short of feet, depriv'd the pow'r to fly;
 There, without hands, upon the field they lie.
 Wrench'd from their holds, and scatter'd all
 around, 195

The bended lances ~~heavy~~ cumber'd ~~and~~.
 Helpless amazement, fear pursuing fear,
 And mad confusion through their hosts appear;

O'er the wild waste with headlong flight they go,
Or creep conceal'd in vaulted holes below. 200

But down Olympus, to the western seas,
Far-shooting Phœbus drove with fainter rays;
And a whole war (so Jove ordain'd) begun,
Was fought, and ceas'd, in one revolving ~~sun~~.

THE END.

